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ABSTRACT

This book examines the evolution in the education of New Zealand women from 1900 through 1975. Early in the century, differences in boys' and girls' schooling were more visible on the secondary than the elementary level. At the same time, a government report concluded that many parents felt girls needed little more than half the education of boys. Textbooks reflected a perception of the inferior position of women in society. There was special instruction for boys in woodworking, but the girls learned "home science." Literature for girls was chosen for its moral content. Because girls were given little instruction in mathematics and science, there were few women available to teach the subjects. Boys learned about agriculture, while girls learned domestic skills. Physical training was viewed as unladylike, while the arts, particularly singing, were encouraged. Popular attitudes encouraged women to stay at home. Experts blamed education for poor health among women. By mid-century, the government removed many vocational restrictions on women. The world wars had put more women in the workplace. Separate schools were maintained for the Maori, but the students were barred from speaking their native language. Educators sought to make Maori girls good farm wives. There are still differences in the ways schools teach boys and girls. Future planning must account for the fact that women will continue to seek work outside the home. Contains 94 references. (SG)

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It's different *for* daughters

A HISTORY OF THE CURRICULUM FOR GIRLS IN NEW ZEALAND SCHOOLS 1900 - 1975

Ruth Fry

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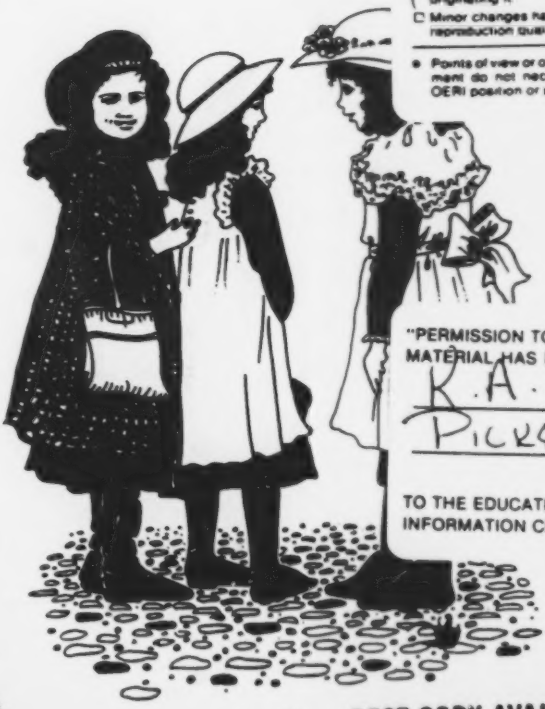

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It's Different for Daughters

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A History of the Curriculum for Girls in New Zealand Schools, 1900-1975

Ruth Fry

New Zealand Council
for Educational Research
Wellington, 1985

New Zealand Council
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PO Box 3237
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Foreword

Much of the history of education in our country – and around the world – has ignored, or mentioned only in passing the experience of girls.

This experience has often been vastly different from that of their brothers. Social attitudes, psychological theories, and assumptions as to the role of women in our society have dramatically shaped the education of young women. In turn this has led, until recently, to the virtual exclusion of women from public life and their limitation to the domestic sphere.

The power of education is immense. It can stimulate, inspire and instil confidence and self-worth. Or it can do just the opposite – dull intellectual curiosity and limit the horizons of personal growth.

Ruth Fry's study of the school curriculum of New Zealand girls from the beginning of this century comes, then, as a welcome addition to the growing body of 'herstory'.

If we are to change the future, we must understand the past. The voices of the strong-minded women of the late 19th century, such as Learmonth Whyte Dalyrymple and Dr Emily Siedeberg, who fought for access to education for women and girls, are now being echoed a century later.

Today's women are realizing that, despite the commitment to equality of educational opportunity which has characterized our educational system, girls' experience has remained far from equal.

The focus has shifted from equal access to education – now taken for granted – to the more subtle questions of subject choice, sexual stereotyping and career opportunities.

And yet, despite the attitudinal barriers that still exist, I believe there is room for optimism. Tremendous gains have been made. It is not so long since women were being told that intellectual work would sap them of strength that would be better stored up for motherhood, or that luring girls away from their 'proper' function would 'endanger the progress of the race'.

Although each generation of women has been subject to entrenched attitudes, each has also been able to look back and see that their experience has been different from that of their mothers, and that their daughters will benefit from opportunities they never had. It *is* different for daughters.

Ruth Fry has brought a new perspective to the history of education. Her book will be an invaluable resource to educators, students and women's studies courses.

But it also deserves – and I have no doubt will find – a wider audience as well. We are, all of us, products of our education.

If we are to know ourselves, we must know what we have been taught, and what we can now usefully discard.

ANN HERCUS
Minister of Women's Affairs

Preface

The impetus to write this book came partly from a personal urge to give form to ideas emerging from my own experience over a number of years, partly from the current revival of concern for inequalities in the education of girls, and partly from awareness of a gap in our educational history. I make no apology for the fact that no such book has been written about the curriculum for boys. The emphasis in all the literature on schooling in New Zealand has, till recently, been so heavily weighted towards the needs and interests of boys that this can only go some way towards redressing the balance. What has been recorded on technical education for boys, apprenticeships and cadet training, gives bulk and disproportion to our educational history.

Many of us who worked in schools in the years immediately following the Second World War believed that the best way to achieve equality, for ourselves and our pupils, was to maintain professional standards and keep at it, without drawing attention to the fact that girls were still at some disadvantage. The broadening curriculum opportunities which the Thomas Report provided seemed to offer hope for all. It was believed that the chances were there and equality would come. If the necessity for any kind of affirmative action was recognized, it was very much below the surface.

A need to understand the processes by which this sanguine attitude to women's education developed and continued furnishes the theme of this book.

Because only selected schools have been used, this cannot be regarded as a complete history. The gaps, or signs of partiality and prejudice, may inspire others to further research.

I have had valuable help from people who have shared with me their experiences of education, as teachers, administrators, theorists

and recipients. As some were informal talks and some taped interviews, it is not possible to mention every name, and some may feel I have made little use of their statements. Everyone with whom I spoke made a useful contribution, if only to prevent me from going far astray, and to all of them I am grateful.

I appreciate the support I received from the New Zealand Council for Educational Research and its director at the time John Watson. Those to whom I owe special thanks are Geraldine McDonald, Assistant-Director of the NZCER, whose interest kept me going; Colin McGeorge of the Education Department of the University of Canterbury who guided me in the paths of educational history; Leila Hurle who dipped into her experience as a principal and senior inspector and provided me with names from which my spread of enquiries radiated; Alistair Campbell for skilful editing; Carlene Grigg for patient typing; my husband, John, for his support and encouragement, and Rachel and Juliet for their forthright criticism and suggestions.

R.F.

Abbreviations Used in Notes

AJHR	Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives
NZEG	New Zealand Education Gazette
NZG	New Zealand Gazette
NZJES	
PD	Parliamentary Debates
WR	White Ribbon
AI & M	Auckland Institute and Museum
CML	Canterbury Museum Library
CPL	Canterbury Public Library
CTCME	Christchurch Teachers' College Museum of Education
HODU	Hocken Library, Dunedin
WTU	Turnbull Library, Wellington

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The caption for the illustration on page 122 was accidentally deleted during re-printing. It should read; *Swedish drill at Nelson College for Girls, 1913* and the photograph is from the Nelson College for Girls Centennial Collection.

1 Primary school girls in Christchurch, 1903.

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PART ONE

Although the world has existed several thousand years, the notion that women have minds as cultivable and worth cultivating as men's minds is still regarded by the ordinary British parent as an offensive, not to say a revolutionary paradox.

James Bryce
Taunton Commission, 1868

He planned brilliant careers for his two sons, and, with a certain amount of warping and delay, they were pursuing these. . . . The daughters, he had hoped, would be their mother's care. He had no ideas about daughters. They happen to a man. . . . But a little daughter is one thing and a daughter quite another.

H. G. Wells
Ann Veronica, 1909

1

The Curriculum Question

'What would you have a woman know?' That eighteenth-century question was still being asked at intervals well into the twentieth century, long after the struggle for girls to gain access to the same areas of knowledge as boys appeared to have subsided. In New Zealand, by 1900, women had for seven years been voting for members of parliament and for 23 years been watching a succession of women receive university degrees. Officially, girls at school had opportunities equal to those of boys, but questions were still being asked about their curriculum. This study of the curriculum for girls from the turn of the century looks at some of these questions. Its aim will be to consider what was offered to girls at school from the age of 10 and the ways in which provisions for girls were publicly debated.

When Sir Anthony Absolute in *The Rivals* asked Mrs Malaprop, 'What would you have a woman know?' he was interested as much in matters of propriety as in subjects of instruction. Both the question and his eccentric companion's answer[1] reflect the eighteenth-century European view of restricted learning for girls, limited by what might give women dangerous power or disturb their delicacy. Very little constructive thought had been given to the matter of educating the female half of the population and, with rare exceptions, the few women with well-cultivated minds were those from households where they picked up what was dropped from the education of their brothers. Satire in the manner of Sheridan and Molière was an acceptable way of ridiculing such education for women as did exist. There was the small boarding school of dubious reputation where Mrs Malaprop would send a nine-year-old to learn

'a little ingenuity and artifice', and there were the blue-stocking cliques of women with intellectual aspirations, Molière's *Précieuses Ridicules*. Serious writing on the subject in England was largely limited to moralistic tracts by men anxious that women should remain submissive. The most notable exception was Mary Wollstonecraft's advocacy in 1790 of a national education system where boys and girls would attend day school together. Here, she suggested, girls might have a chance to show that they can 'become better as they grow wiser and become free'.[2]

In the hundred years that followed, there was a ferment of views on the status of women and educational reform, with some dramatic changes. John Stuart Mill's outcry in his book, *The Subjection of Women*, had presented possibilities of radical social and political change. Together with Jeremy Bentham and others he had advocated greater state involvement in education and, by the end of the century, a national system of compulsory education for both sexes was assured in England. New Zealand's own national system providing for girls and boys alike was formulated in 1877. Waves of pedagogical thought from Europe and America suggested widening possibilities for education both before and beyond the primary stage.

Frances Mary Buss, Dorothea Beale, Anne Clough and their supporters had fought and won their campaign for secondary schools for girls in England. A certain euphoria followed the achievements and it might have been thought that the question of equality in education was settled. In the midst of the battle, Miss Buss, announcing an early success, had exclaimed, 'Thank God, we have abolished sex in education!'[3] In New Zealand, supporters of women's suffrage looked to education to reinforce the political and legal rights they had won, and even their opponents acknowledged the usefulness of education if women were inevitably to have a say in the affairs of the nation.[4]

Progress there undoubtedly was, and, as far as girls' schooling was concerned, much of it depended on pioneer teachers who were Amazons in their profession. To point out the erratic nature of that progress is in no way to diminish their contribution or to discount the gains. Uninterrupted advance has not characterized women's affairs in general. There have been plateaux, setbacks and detours and it is pertinent not only to show when these occurred but also

LB

to ask why they happened when they did. This involves looking beyond the school curriculum itself to influences from without.

Official regulations which, at the beginning of the century, gave detailed instructions for what should be taught in schools are only one part of what is understood by 'curriculum'. If these alone were to be considered, there would be enough evidence for some examination of the differences between a girl's schooling and a boy's, but the picture would be incomplete. Hilda Taba's view of the curriculum as 'a way of preparing young people to function as productive members of our society'[5] suggests that, through the curriculum, society's expectations are transmitted. This has been described by some as a politically manipulative process, easier to recognize in a totalitarian state than in a democracy, but none the less significant. In observing girls' schooling in New Zealand from 1900 it must be asked to what extent political and economic expediency have influenced the choices made by and for girls, and therefore determined what was expected of them. This involves a broad interpretation of curriculum. Dr C. E. Beeby, talking of curriculum planning in 1968, saw curriculum as covering four things: a statement or an assumption about the aims of schooling; a statement of the content of what the children are to learn and experience and of the amount of choice they will have within that content; a statement of the method or methods most likely to achieve those aims; and, fourthly, a statement of how the work of the schools is to be evaluated.[6] It is on Dr Beeby's second requirement that this study will concentrate: what girls through the curriculum are able to learn and experience, and the nature of the choices available to them. The experience of schooling leads into the area of the hidden curriculum which appears to operate persuasively through school organization, attitudes and omissions rather than through explicit policy. If this is taken into account, an appropriate definition for this purpose could be one from a feminist perspective on women in New Zealand education: 'Curriculum in its broadest sense may be defined as both those activities and sets of meanings which are intentionally taught, or intended to be taught, and those activities or sets of meanings which, although not intentionally taught, are in effect learned.'[7]

In an attempt to recapture the experience of learning, a wide variety of sources has been explored, including official statements

and personal reminiscences. It is possible to place too much weight on the surviving pronouncements of those who were vocal enough to make speeches or write for newspapers and magazines. At least it can be assumed that what appeared in print was also being talked about and can cautiously be taken as reflecting attitudes that were then current.

The framework is designed to avoid repetition and to give due weight to the early years of this century when attention was directed towards the role of women. Accordingly, Part One sets the scene with a survey of the curriculum for girls from the age of 10 in different school situations and a summary of relevant social attitudes in the first 25 years. In Part Two, each chapter deals with a separate topic where a difference in curricula for boys and girls was maintained up to the year of the conference on Education and the Equality of the Sexes, 1975.

Very thorough and useful accounts of primary and secondary schooling, of district high schools, technical schools and intermediate schools in New Zealand have already appeared. In these, considerable attention is paid to the separate activities of boys, but only passing reference to those of girls. Indeed the assumption that equal opportunities existed for boys and girls has been challenged only recently. Where identical courses have not been considered practicable or suitable, attempts to offer equivalent opportunities have left some girls, and boys as well, at a disadvantage. An account of the development of the curriculum may, therefore, contribute to a fuller understanding of the present position.

One regret in concentrating on curriculum is that it leaves little scope for dwelling on the characters who stride across the scene or linger modestly in the wings. They receive better treatment in some of the school histories which have appeared with New Zealand's flush of centenaries, but even these, with their tendency to smooth over difficulties, do these people scant justice. Their names may appear, but no attempt has been made to evaluate their personal impact on the course of education or to ensure that all those who were influential have been mentioned. It has been necessary to use as examples mostly schools in Canterbury with some others selected as suitable for comparison or because of available information concerning the history of their curricula. Tempting by-ways such as provision for girls in alternative schemes, for those with special

needs and for increasing numbers of new New Zealanders have not been explored. The focus is on the mainstream of development in the education of girls.

How, then, did those responsible for the curriculum answer the question, 'What would you have a woman know?' And why, in the face of change, did similar questions persist?

2

At Primary School

Differences in school experience for boys and girls appear to be more marked in secondary than in primary schools. However, because at the turn of the century 'school', that is public primary school,* was the only formal education for many, and because, in spite of traditional division, the process of education is a continuous one, it seems appropriate to start by trying to recapture what it was like to be a girl in the upper part of the primary school in the first quarter of this century.

Accounts of the curriculum in action at the beginning of this period give an impression of narrowly interpreted prescriptions pursued in an atmosphere of strictly imposed order. The last decade of the nineteenth century was marked by an insistence on the status quo. The vigorous debate which had heralded the Education Act of 1877 had burnt itself out and there was now little innovation. The inspectors who were responsible for administering the 'standards' examinations valued strict adherence to the syllabus rather than originality. Teaching was for results in the annual examinations on which progress from one class to another depended, and this meant uniformity and rigidity. Requests for an enquiry into the system were repeatedly brushed aside and it was not acceptable to suggest that 'the system was not absolutely perfect and complete'.[1]

Many teachers, and the Inspector General, George Hogben, appointed in April 1899, saw the need for change. Amended regulations, gazetted in July 1899, gave more responsibility to class teachers in passing their pupils from one standard to the next.[2] It

*In New Zealand, a public school is one run by the State.

was still in the hands of inspectors to conduct the all-important Proficiency Examination in Standard 6. With this, or a certificate of exemption saying that they had passed Standard 5, pupils were allowed to finish school before the leaving age which was 13 till 1901, and then 14.[3]

The average 10-year-old girl was likely to be in Standard 3 where there would also be others considerably older than herself. Girls would be expected to go on to Standard 6, although a number dropped out as they reached the leaving age. A seventh standard had been permitted from 1885 but, as there was no syllabus and seldom separate teaching, it was not popular. The ratio of girls to boys aged 10 and over was roughly the same as that for primary school children in the country as a whole, 48 percent to 52 percent in 1900.[4] This was an improvement on the past (38 percent had been girls in 1877), but the fact that girls' enrolments and attendances continued to be lower than boys' was a matter for concern. By 1909, for every 100 boys on the roll, there were 91 girls, whereas census figures gave an expectation of 97 girls.[5] Parents seem to have been less eager to send their small daughters off to school, the ratio of girls to boys being lower in the 5 to 7 age group. In the Department's report in 1909, the comment was made:

> Apparently there are a certain number of parents who think that it is sufficient for a girl to have a little more than half the amount of schooling that a boy receives.[6]

Their late start does not seem to have delayed their progress, as girls passed through the standards more quickly than boys: between 12 and 15, there were again fewer girls than boys at school.[7] This was not because more were going on to secondary school where, in 1909, girls comprised under 45 percent of the total roll,[8] but because a number of girls were leaving school for good before the age of 13.

Superficially, the equality which the system claimed to provide meant the same opportunity for girls and boys. A 10-year-old girl would go off with her brothers to the local school and, if it was in the country, they would share the same classroom. But in city schools, there were often separate classrooms, as at Sydenham where, in 1901, the practice was beginning to cause financial anxiety,[9] and at Christchurch Normal School where the girls were

almost entirely segregated on the top floor of their Victorian-Gothic building. Personal reminiscences indicate that there were more shared activities in small country schools where girls filled up teams for football practice and boys would join with girls for rounders and, later, basketball. At playtime, they would play together such games as French and English, Chivy Chase and Tip Cat.

However, even in country schools, separate playgrounds were common and the North Canterbury Education Board had a ruling that 'as far as possible one part of the playground should be set apart for girls and one for boys, except when under the immediate personal supervision of a teacher'.[10]

As in the social organization, so in the regulations concerning curriculum, there were slight but none the less important differences. An Order in Council gazetted on 1 January 1899, requiring all girls at any public school to learn needlework, stated:

> The Inspector shall judge all other work done by the girls more leniently than that done by the boys in such a degree as would be implied in reducing by 10 percent the minimum marks required for a pass.[11]

While the girls did needlework, the boys, with high expectation that they might become clerks or civil servants, were at first given extra arithmetic, a subject for which they were seen to have practical need and possibly greater aptitude.

Basic Subjects

Arithmetic was a heavily weighted subject. It was of practical value, it could be used for applying theories of faculty training,[12] progress could easily be measured and, given methods of rote learning and reciting or 'singing' tables, it was handy for maintaining discipline. It was less taxing on the teacher's originality and, at the time of the inspector's visit, a teacher with a well-drilled class could put on an impressive display. Memories of monotonous arithmetic lessons dominate accounts of early schooling. Those who were good at the subject do not seem to have resented the emphasis, though there is evidence that, where time-tabling was rigid, those who finished first were reduced to boredom and could even be kept busy by having to rub out their work and do it again.

There was public interest in the teaching of arithmetic in schools. In the *Otago Daily Times* of 9 February 1904, a leading article on arithmetic took precedence over a sub-leader, not nearly as long, on the impending Russo-Japanese War. The writer commended the Minister for calling inspectors together to discuss new approaches to teaching and went on to criticize the way in which arithmetic was taught, for five or six hours a week, with little practical bearing on life. Change did not come quickly and, in the meantime, girls were learning that this subject was the one in which they were expected to have the least aptitude.

The common Standard 6 arithmetic examination consisted of five written sums, and inspectors were instructed to pass girls with two and a half sums right whereas boys needed three. Before long, teachers argued that the same concession should be allowed to boys and the discrimination was removed.[13]

A system that expected of girls a lower level of achievement than was exacted from their brothers was not likely to give them confidence to cope with more advanced mathematics. Moreover, mechanical methods of teaching appear to have compounded the problem. Even a bright pupil, like Jessie Hetherington [later to become the first woman secondary school inspector] might feel disadvantaged:

> In arithmetic we learned to do sums but were never informed of the names of the operations so that 'numerator', 'denominator', 'compound division' and so on sounded like wizardry to those going on to other schools.[14]

The only other discriminatory clause in the 1899 syllabus came, curiously, under the heading of Art, but here again exemption was allowed to girls on mathematical grounds. It was based on the assumption that they would have neither the need nor the capacity for defining and drawing geometrical shapes: 'the sphere and cube, the cone and pyramid, the cylinder and prism and slabs'. The regulation stated: 'Teachers may claim exemption for girls from examination in geometrical drawing.'[15] Some allowance might also be made for boys in smaller schools, as it was unlikely that women teachers with whom, for reasons of economy, country schools were often staffed, had any experience of geometrical drawing.

Among the class books authorized by Order in Council for use in public schools in June 1899, were several arithmetic texts

published in England and the popular Southern Cross Arithmetic, published by Whitcombe and Tombs.[16] These gave practice in the usual tables and skills and in problems, often improbable but sometimes socially illuminating. Women are rarely seen to be involved, though there are knotty questions concerning curtaining and the area of carpet required for rooms of different shapes. A typical problem in the Standard 6 book appears under the heading 'Slate Work':

> How many cakes would be required for a school of 57 children, of whom 26 are boys and the rest girls, if each girl has $^1/_5$ of a cake and each boy half as much again as each girl?[17]

At the turn of the century, the arithmetic book and the reader provided the basis for all work in the 'pass' subjects that were examinable by the inspectors: reading, spelling and dictation, writing, composition and arithmetic. Readers were the only books many children read and something of their dependence on them and pride of ownership comes through in the ominous inscriptions in their own writing: 'Black is the raven, black is the rook, / Black is the girl who steals this book.'[18] The owner of a well-worn copy of the Standard Four Reading Book of Nelson's Royal Readers has written in the back of her book, 'If this book should from me wander, box its hears [*sic*] and send it home.' A great deal is packed into this book: English nature study, outlines of British history with dates, poems, word exercises, dictation, elliptical dictation and, among many stories of warfare and adventure, one sad tale of mawkish sentiment concerning motherly love and filial duty.[19]

In these imported readers, teachers had plenty of material to use, if they so wished, for moral instruction. Local publishers, keen to be on the bandwagon, had their books approved for use in schools, and the Whitcombe and Tombs Imperial Readers gained in popularity. These drew on some of the same morally didactic material, often selected, it appears, for its sentiment rather than for its literary quality. The work ethic lent itself to sententious verse:

> Labour is rest from the sorrows that greet us . . .
> Work, – and pure slumber shall wait on thy pillow;
> Work, – thou shalt ride over care's coming billow;
> Lie not down wearied 'neath woe's weeping willow.[20]

More memorable were the much-repeated verses of Longfellow's 'Psalm of Life', 'Let us then be up and doing . . .', and more haunting Carlyle's lines, 'So here hath been dawning another blue day; / Think, wilt thou let it slip useless away?'

There would be no doubt about the nature of women's work. The Fifth Imperial Reader contained a group of poems on 'The Joys and Sanctities of Home Life'. A popular poem in this group was Robert Burns' 'A Cotter's Saturday Night' in which the father returned to 'his wee bit ingle, blinkin' bonnily' to be greeted by 'his thriftie wifie's smile'. Her thrift was shown in her ability 'w'her needle an' her shears' to make old clothes look almost as good as new.

The scope of the Reader was widened with the adoption of a greatly revised syllabus in 1904. This did away with the division into 'pass' and 'optional' subjects and increased the number of subjects that were compulsory. It was suggested that at least two readers should be used, one to be mainly or entirely literary while the other, which was not to be a text book, could contain matters of geographic, scientific or historical interest.[21] Moves to bring in greater uniformity in readers and a free text book system were not popular. However, out of requests for uniformity grew the *School Journal*, started as a monthly publication in 1907 to provide extra reading, primarily in history and geography.

Reading aloud from readers and journals was a daily activity and an essential part of the inspector's examination. Attention to careful speech and, beyond that, to training in elocution has appealed to women in New Zealand more than to men. Although it seems likely that girls took more kindly to reading aloud, the instructions to inspectors were clearly intended for boys and girls alike: in the higher standards, they state, good readers will be those who

> because their thought and feeling respond to every reasonable demand made upon them by the writer, are able to make the reading their own for the time being, and to make the meaning clear by appropriate tones of voice. Their reading will be rhetorical in the best sense, though not histrionic.[22]

Recitation was in vogue and to be able to recite poems of considerable length was an accomplishment girls were often encouraged to master. It was also an examinable requirement. The syllabus stipulated not fewer than 150 lines of suitable standard

poetry in Standard 5 and 250 lines in Standard 6. One of the objects of the exercise was

> that they may have stored up in their memory masterpieces that may develop their imagination, and may, whether the children themselves are conscious of the operation or not, mould their taste for good literature.[23]

In written expression, the imagination was given little play. The syllabus had some suggestions such as the retelling of fables and ballads and seemed to allow more flexibility than many teachers were prepared to take. They felt themselves under pressure from the inspectors who kept watch on the basic skills.

Some of the Readers gave highly controlled outlines for compositions. For the average, there was security in these undemanding topics. Creative talent has a way of leaping over fences and it would be interesting to know now what Katherine Mansfield made of the common topic, 'A Sea Voyage', with which she had won the composition prize at Karori School.[24] As she was bad at spelling and often ignored the requirements of grammar, the composition is not likely to have been judged on the purely mechanical use of English.

Hogben did not believe that the learning of grammar improved writing, and his insistence that it was not necessary to teach grammatical terms was one of the many points on which his syllabus was at first criticized.[25] More grammar crept back into the syllabus as a pre-requisite for secondary-school subjects.

Copybooks, which were used for handwriting, allowed no scope for originality of style, though an early series, Darnell's Foolscap Copy Books, had one entitled 'Ornamental and Ladies' Angular Hand'.[26] In the list of class books for use in Public Schools in 1905, the requirements for writing were 'Blank books, or any copybooks in which the style is upright, or nearly so, clear and continuous'.[27] There were many complaints from employers that the teaching of handwriting was not sufficiently uniform.

The Wider Curriculum

Many teachers were still inadequately trained and felt insecure outside the basic subjects. They were not all familiar with the educational philosophy that inspired Hogben and were ambivalent about the purpose of teaching the wide range of subjects required by the 1904 syllabus and its successor, the Revised Syllabus of 1913. In Standard 4, for example, the compulsory subjects were English, arithmetic, drawing, singing, physical education, geography and history, including civic instruction. Additional subjects, which should not be regarded as optional, were elementary science or object lessons, handwork and further courses in geography and history.[28] Some of the more adaptable teachers tried ways of coordinating subjects in order to make learning pleasurable, to emphasize relevance and to overcome time-tabling problems. At the other extreme, many subjects were still ignored. It was in the treatment given to subjects other than arithmetic, reading and writing that girls were most affected by the changing curriculum.

In no area was ambivalence more obvious than in the teaching of history. The report of the inspectors to the Nelson Education Board in 1903 expressed one point of view, regretting that many teachers who regarded history as unimportant chose to substitute handwork. They welcomed the stress on history in the forthcoming new syllabus, seeing it as a subject which could 'inspire and upraise the youth of the nation by cultivating the idea of a national pedigree'. They saw it as a morally improving subject and felt that 'even the meanest-born' could be uplifted by a sense of membership of the British Empire

> the proudest known to historical annals. . . . Innumerable instances convince [the child] that native ability and well-directed effort have made many a man his own ancestor. He feels that he too must strive.[29]

No doubt girls could be inspired to accept some passive part in building this 'sense of national pedigree', but tales of Empire were essentially concerned with male action. In spite of the symbolic presence of Queen Victoria, even after her death, and the personification of Mother England ('My arm is nothing weak, my strength is not gone by; / Sons, I have borne many sons, but my

dugs are not yet dry'),[30] the empire is a man's world. In Whitcombe and Tombs' Historical Readers, written to fulfil the requirements for the course in British History, stress is laid on the development of the Colonial Empire and the text is interspersed with sections of Kipling's poem, 'Song of the English'. It ends:

> Stand to your world and be wise – certain of
> sword and pen,
> Who are neither children nor gods, but men
> in a world of men.

Blatant as it was, this emphasis in history books caused not a ripple at the time. Kipling himself collaborated in writing a history book in which the writers suggest that modern inventions may have made us happier than our grandfathers were, in the common sense of the word 'happy'.

> But [they ask] have they made us better, braver, more self-denying and more manly boys, more tender, more affectionate, more home-loving women and girls? It is for you, boys and girls, who are growing up, to resolve that you will be all these things, and to be true to your resolutions.[31]

Queen Elizabeth was treated as an exceptional woman who understood the manly virtues, as was Queen Victoria. 'Therefore men gave their treasure and their blood / To this one woman – for she understood!'[32] Not so Queen Anne.

> She herself was almost the stupidest woman in her dominions; but she was a good and kindly soul, devoted to the Church of England, and had generally the sense to leave affairs of state to her ministers.[33]

Mary Queen of Scots appeared as a mournful heroine and Florence Nightingale in the role of ministering angel, in nightgown with lamp, and never as a determined rebel.

Historical readers were now appearing with an emphasis on New Zealand history, and some English history books were being printed with slender chapters on Australasia. There was a great emphasis on citizenship and books were written to meet this need. In 1907, Cassell and Company brought out a New Zealand edition of *The Citizen Reader*. The writers of this book assumed that the majority of school children would one day have public duties to perform – 'the boys in most cases by direct action, and the girls by indirect but powerful influence'.[34] It is mentioned as a matter of course that 'every boy and girl may look forward to being an elector one

day',[35] but no mention is made of the successful struggle of New Zealand women to gain the vote, well ahead of most of their overseas sisters. All illustrations and examples given are of men voting.

A good citizen was a responsible voter and was expected to be thrifty. Saving against the future was encouraged, and out of this teaching of civic responsibility grew long years of thrift clubs and dealings with the Post Office Savings Bank. Everyone was encouraged to save, but boys had an extra responsibility, when they grew up and had families, to guard against leaving widows and children destitute.

In the hands of an inspired teacher, history came alive and the teaching of civics was related to real responsibilities. The syllabus endorsed what a few enlightened teachers were already doing; for others it opened up new possibilities, but for some it remained a daunting subject, to be ignored or to become 'the most hopeless confusion of dates and persons'.[36]

Geography offered greater opportunities of proceeding from the known to the unknown, for making discoveries in the local environment which could be applied to the wider world. Some textbooks in use offered suggestions for the 'object lesson' approach to geography. For a lesson on rain, 'a kettle of boiling water, a slate, a thistle head' might be useful, and for hills 'two apples of equal size, one baked and allowed to cool'.[37] In spite of emphasis on activity, for many, the learning of geography amounted to memorizing the definitions which appeared as a summary at the end of a chapter.

A reader which appeared in 1904, *The Geography of New Zealand*, claimed to deal with historical, physical, political and commercial geography. In this book, facts of contemporary life were presented without comment and without dates. In the same tone, we are told that income tax is sixpence in the pound for those with an income of over £300 and

> the franchise is extended to every adult person in the colony and every male over twenty-one years of age who is not a contractor for the public service and is not a civil servant is eligible for election.[38]

Young minds were not asked to ponder on what women had yet to win.

For girls in particular, reproducing intricate maps in fine detail

had been one of the accomplishments fostered in the Dame Schools. Some teachers perpetuated this exacting skill, though they were advised to try simpler maps, starting with their own locality. The map that found pride of place in every classroom was the flat map of the world with possessions of the British Empire marked in red.

Nationhood and civic responsibility were emphasized in the *School Journal* and patriotic zeal was given expression in the ceremonies of Empire Day and Anzac Day.

Hand and Eye

A part of Hogben's wider approach to education was his advocacy of manual training which, he held, would provide an opportunity for true coordination of all subjects of instruction. The immediate result of the Manual and Technical Instruction Act, 1900, was provision for centres with specialist instructors where boys went for woodwork and girls for cooking. This, for some, meant travelling long distances by train, and remoter areas were unable to benefit. Even this minimal domestic training was not available to all and there was anxiety that the primary schools were 'concerned but little with the fundamental education of girls for their natural function as wives and mothers'.[39] In the 1913 syllabus there is the first official inclusion of a course in 'home science' to be taught 'where the circumstances of the school and the staff permit'.[40]

The growth of home science belongs to another chapter. In the primary schools it did not develop into a scientific subject. Though there was talk about training in scientific method, the teaching in sciences was haphazard. Nature study, favoured as a subject for girls, might involve keeping notes on observation of the living world or cultivating plots in the school garden, but it could mean reading a chapter from a text book. Practical work in elementary science merged with the 'object lesson', and scientific content depended on the interest and training of the teacher. Men emerging from Christchurch Training College would have received their scientific instruction in agriculture and women in hygiene.[41]

All women teachers were expected to teach sewing. Changes in fashion and materials made little difference to the view that it was a necessity and a duty for women to be able to sew. One enthusiastic

2 Cooking class at Ponsonby Manual Training School, Auckland, 1903.

3 Demonstration nature study class, early 1900s.

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teacher addressing her fellows at a meeting of the North Canterbury Women Teachers' Association described her work on sewing day:

> I have at present on sewing day over thirty girls who are learning to sew, another six in the lowest Primer class who are at other work, and twenty-five boys. I am teaching the upper Primer boys to sew in order to have one class less to attend to, and also, I must confess, in order to put into practice a favourite theory of mine – that boys should be taught to use their needle to a certain extent. Now with one large sewing class (forty in all) consisting of all the standards and Primer 3, and two other classes on the gallery employed in drawing, reading, writing and counting, I find my time quite fully and arduously occupied . . .

It was, she claimed, the mark of a good needlewoman to be able to make a large buttonhole very well in five minutes, and her 15-minute exam for Standard 6 girls required them to make a buttonhole, make one eyelet hole and cut out and pin together a small pillow case.[42] One of her colleagues expressed the view that, although the sewing lesson is a hard one, 'nothing a girl learns in the whole of her school career will be as useful to her as the lessons she learns on sewing days'.[43]

The emphasis on plain sewing was no doubt part of a reaction against fancywork in the post-Victorian era. In the 1913 syllabus, some decorative work, including smocking, crept back in. The arrival of the sewing machine was acknowledged in some of the suggested changes, but practical hand-sewing was what girls continued to learn. It was not thought of as a creative activity and it remained a required alternative for girls. A committee set up in England to report on Differentiation of Curricula between the sexes suggested in its report in 1923 that if there was liking for the work there might be little difference between the achievements of boys and girls in such subjects as needlework and gardening. It appeared that 'a boy's control of his hands was at least equal to that of a girl, and he was often more particular and exact'.[44] However, the committee made no positive recommendation to break down the division.

'Hand and eye' training did not at this stage embrace the concept of free expression. There was talk of adapting Froebel's kindergarten 'occupations' to creative activity for older children and of Montessori's methods for encouraging the education of the senses. But art, music, drama and movement had to wait until a later period to develop as creative subjects of the curriculum.

Health

The question of differentiation arose over matters of physical education, to be dealt with as a separate topic in Chapter 9, and in connection with health. Medical information supplied to the English committee considering different curriculum needs indicated that there was 'a decided difference between boys and girls in the rate and periodicity of growth and development'.[45]

> Girls [it said] are often more robust than boys before the age of 11 or 12, but after the onset of adolescence, which occurs as a rule shortly after the beginning of the Secondary School period from the age of 12 onwards, they are on the whole less strong than boys, being more inclined to suffer from nervous strain and more liable to fatigue.

This, they were informed, was partly due to the lower amount of haemoglobin in a girl's blood, leading to a reduced 'capacity for oxygen interchange and metabolic rehabilitation'.[46] In New Zealand, the information was picked up and related to secondary schooling, not taking into account the later starting age. A number of girls between 12 and 14 were still at primary school where such matters as the onset of menstruation were largely ignored.

A scheme for the regular medical inspection of school children had been in operation in New Zealand from 1912.[47] In 1925, a survey of the health of a sample of 20,000 primary school children from Standard 3 upwards revealed that the physique of the average New Zealand girl was 'superior' by world standards, in spite of an alarmingly high incidence of goitre. At 13, she was almost an inch taller and 5.6 pounds heavier than the average Australian girl of the same age. She was 2.3 inches taller and 9.8 pounds heavier than her English counterpart. Variations in the rate of growth between boys and girls were noted, and the fact that girls showed a maximum rate of weight increase at a little over 12 years, while boys did not, seemed to suggest 'the advisability of a differentation of educational curriculum for boys and girls between the ages of 11 and 14'.[48] The same factor, it was deduced, had a bearing on the fact that the percentage of boys winning Junior National Scholarships, for which the maximum age was 13, was twice that of girls. This was a joint survey by the Departments of Health and Education, and correlations between physical development and school performance

were a part of the exercise. However, this appears to be a case where scientific evidence was stretched to fit a persisting view – that there were physical reasons for modifying the curriculum for adolescent girls. The survey, it was claimed, showed a diversity of interests between boys and girls, the boys securing 20 percent higher scores than girls in geography and history, although the girls scored as well or higher in reading and comprehension, and there was very little difference between the sexes in the total score. Health evidence was not strong enough to disturb the status quo. There were financial and administrative reasons for not separating boys' and girls' courses in the upper standards of primary schools. The allocation of senior positions in a teaching force where males were in the minority would have posed a problem.

Personal hygiene, often the province of women teachers, was taught in a routine manner, with breathing exercises, handkerchief drill and inspection of hands and fingernails. Healthy living was, at the same time, a moral matter. Women's groups were active in encouraging instruction on the evils of drink. Temperance Charts provided by the Women's Christian Temperance Union hung on classroom walls. Rationalization of this practice was sought in a system that was secular, though religious instruction could take place when a school was officially closed for the day. Temperance instruction was justified by the Canterbury Education Board:

> The teaching is in the main dogmatic, but as the aim is practical rather than cultural, and as only ascertained facts are presented, this is not a defect.[49]

Women Teachers

The chances of being taught by a woman at some stage of primary schooling were very high as women responded in increasing numbers to opportunities of earning a living. The prevailing belief was that all children under 10 and girls above that age benefited from being taught by a woman. The distribution of teachers throughout the service did not fit in with this pattern, as men held the highest positions and dominated the powerful New Zealand Educational Institute which looked after their professional interests. In 1901, Wellington women teachers set up their own organization, and other branches followed. Their suggestion that schools should

be divided, with responsible teachers in charge of three sections – infants, girls and boys – might have opened up positions for them as heads of departments.[50] However, they continued to fill the ranks of assistant teachers or to take charge of small country schools. To become pupil teachers was attractive to schoolgirls when few other avenues were open to them. This involved at first a four-year apprenticeship and, after the re-organization of teacher-training in 1905, pupil teachers spent two years in schools, and a further two at training college. For many girls who had reached the age of 14 it was a way of continuing their education, as headmasters were paid extra to coach them in subjects for their certificates before and after school. These headmasters were under pressure. The consequence of failure could be a letter such as one received by the Headmaster of Leeston School in 1901:

> The Board desires me to remind you that in addition to her failure in Latin, Miss B. was weak in several subjects, in view of which the Board could not treat her as having passed, consequently you are not entitled to full instruction fees.[51]

Searching for reasons why boys did not apply to become pupil teachers, the Headmaster of Woolston School came up with these suggestions: (1) lads who are not naturally studious do not care for the idea of 4 or 5 years' study, (2) teachers' salaries are not enough to attract the more able, (3) clever boys find other openings more readily than girls do, and (4) it is probable that the work is less congenial to most boys than it is to girls.[52] Returns at the end of 1925 indicate the predominance of women teachers and their comparatively low status.

Table showing the number of women teachers to each 100 men[53]

	1915	1922	1925
Adult teachers			
All schools	193	197	199
Schools with roll 1-20	323	299	236
Schools with roll over 20	176	182	193
Pupil-teachers	344	223	179
Probationers	647	349	286
Training College students	387	256	186

Comparative Salaries[54]

35% of certificated male teachers receive salaries over £400
57% of certificated male teachers receive salaries over £350
39% of certificated women teachers receive salaries over £250

Whatever the reasons, many girls were taught by women and had close links with girls little older than themselves who came back as pupil teachers. Inspectors commented on the motherly influence of women teachers, with whom older girls often established a 'mate' relationship. This demonstrated itself in little ways. They would bring flowers for the classroom and the teacher might respond by supplying a discarded scent bottle to hold water to dampen the notoriously smelly slate rags.

It has been suggested in recent studies that the 'feminine' environment of elementary schools favours girls.[55] Particularly in reading, girls at this stage appear to have the advantage. At least from the age of 10, girls have shown higher scores than boys in verbal skills,[56] and boys are over-represented in remedial classes.[57] Whether this is the result of girls' being given greater reinforcement by women teachers is not established. At least it does appear that older girls at primary school in the early years of this century identified themselves with their women teachers and possibly gained from the fact that attitudes towards them were not as punitive and admonitory as those of men teachers were to boys.

The reforming zeal of George Hogben had helped to bring the curriculum of the New Zealand primary school into line with overseas trends. During the war years which followed his retirement there was little energy or finance for educational reform. A revised syllabus in 1919 clarified and extended the ideas Hogben had introduced. The way was paved for the new progressivism which was abroad in the twenties; students were introduced to John Dewey's theories and Percy Nunn's ideas of individual development; they learnt about the scientific movement in education, with psychological experiments and intelligence testing.[58] When Sir John Adams, the creator of the Dalton Plan for individual assignments, visited Wellington Training College, he opened his lecture with a memorable challenge: 'When I say I teach Mary Latin,

what am I doing? No matter how much I think I am teaching Latin, it is Mary whom I teach.'[59]

It is not possible to gauge how much of this penetrated to the schools. To some extent they remained hide-bound by the Proficiency Examination which was not to disappear till 1935. It was the final goal of primary schooling, although a quarter of those leaving in one year might not have reached Standard 6.[60]

In many ways, life at primary school gave girls and boys a better chance of functioning on an equal footing than they were likely to meet in the family or at work where their roles would be more sharply divided. However, through their primary school experience, girls would receive messages which were in keeping with the expectations of society: boys were rougher and not particularly companionable; boys were heading for more adventurous lives and were likely to be the leaders; boys were better at arithmetic and played different games; needlework and cooking were women's tasks; women could be teachers and this was something brighter girls could aspire to, though for most the future would be in the domestic sphere where the health and morality of the family would be in their care. Whether or not they did anything with their Proficiency Certificate depended largely on circumstances and attitudes at home where the strongest socializing influences were at work.

3

Secondary Education – Beginnings and Opportunities

In the late nineteenth century, New Zealand had a fair supply of strongminded, well-informed middle-class women who campaigned for access to paid employment, to political rights and to higher education. The development of secondary education for girls, with an academic bias and middle-class values, owes much to these Victorian feminists. In this leadership, we seem to have been more fortunate than Australia.[1] An explanation may be that in New Zealand there were fewer men gaining position through rapidly accumulated wealth and requiring their wives and daughters to imitate the aristocracy by being decorative and languid. New Zealand was not immune to such influences, but, at the same time, articulate women were emerging who were prepared to use their intellect and energies in campaigns for moral improvement and the advancement of women. It has been suggested that, in the 'planned' settlements of South Australia, Canterbury and Otago, conditions for women were better than in other parts of the colonies, and there was more 'opportunity for enlightened women to influence sympathetic men in high places'.[2]

One such campaigner was Learmonth Whyte Dalrymple of Dunedin, a woman of impressive bearing and persuasive pen.[3] She corresponded with England's pioneer headmistresses, Miss Buss and Miss Beale, and, with the support of prominent Dunedin citizens, worked towards the establishment in 1871 of Otago Girls' High School, the first state secondary school for girls in the southern hemisphere. Acceptance of the plan was eased by local satisfaction with the establishment of Otago Boys' High School, by evidence of the success of a growing number of girls' schools in England, and

perhaps by news of two new girls' high schools in Edinburgh, following the Scottish endowed schools act of 1869.[4] However,Miss Dalrymple's campaign went back to 1863 and was based on local support for an immediate need.

Breaking down resistance to including women in university courses was another of Miss Dalrymple's aims. This was a vital development for girls' secondary education. From the start, there were no university regulations which excluded women. The Otago Provincial Council had in 1869 set up a university which was officially opened in 1871. A legal quibble and strong opposition from some of the university staff did not prevent women from attending lectures, though they were not always welcome and were not admitted to degrees till Otago became affiliated to the University of New Zealand in 1874.[5] Canterbury University College (1873) was already affiliated, Auckland was admitted in 1883 and Victoria University College, Wellington, in 1899. There were at the same time some secondary schools, bearing the title 'college', which were affiliated to the university. One of these was Auckland College and Grammar School. While controversy raged in Otago over the admission of women to higher education, Auckland had other feuds to follow and, in 1874, the application of Kate Millington Edger for a university scholarship and for admission to degree classes at Auckland Grammar School was tacitly accepted. In 1877, she became the first New Zealand woman graduate (the second in the Commonwealth) and her success was greeted as a sign of the country's liberality in the education of women. 'In this land of ours,' claimed the *New Zealand Herald*, 'female intellect and female studiousness have scope in which to display themselves.'[6]

Informal admission to classes of a sympathetic professor was a well-tried way of penetrating into male academic preserves. In seeking such an opportunity for her daughter, Mrs George Connon chose well when she approached Professor Macmillan Brown of Canterbury College.[7] The story of this propitious encounter is well known. Helen Connon and John Macmillan Brown were to have a wide influence in the field of women's education in their close association as teacher and student, as Chairman of Board and Lady Principal, as husband and wife as well as in their separate careers.

A steady stream of women graduates provided leadership for the new girls' schools: for instance Helen Connon, MA Hons (1st class)

in English, the first woman masters graduate, became second Principal of Christchurch Girls' High School where Kate Edger (BA, 1877 and MA 1881) taught before becoming Lady Principal of Nelson College for Girls in 1883. Ellen Pitcaithly, MA, became headmistress of Invercargill High School in 1879, Mary McLean, MA, Hons in English and Latin, was first assistant at Timaru High School from 1890, Principal of Timaru Girls' High School in 1898 and, from 1900, Principal of Wellington Girls' High School. The sisters Mary and Beatrice Gibson who graduated MA at Canterbury in 1888 both became principals of girls' schools, Mary in Christchurch and Beatrice in Nelson. It would be easy to add to this list and still not give adequate credit to the able and determined women who staffed these fledgling schools. They were working against lingering prejudice with poor pay and cramped conditions, usually under the shadow of a more richly endowed brother school.

It was natural that the Mother Country should provide the model for the new secondary schools. Primary education in New Zealand was linked with English movements to educate the masses. It was not until the Education Act of 1902 that there was any growth in English county and municipal secondary schools maintained by the newly formed Local Education Authorities. Secondary education was for some time a middle-class affair and what was happening in New Zealand was parallel growth. Among the schools commended by the Schools Enquiry Commission – the Bryce Commission, set up in England in 1894 – were those of the Girls' Public Day School Company (formed in 1872 and converted to a trust, the GPDST, in 1906). Using as a model the schools started by Miss Buss, the North London Collegiate School (1850) and the Camden School (1871), the company set out to provide high schools with moderate fees which would cut across class barriers and have no church affiliations.[8] Such schools combined the academic aims and liberal views which could take root in New Zealand. Miss Dalrymple who, with her committee, drew up the requirements for Otago Girls' High School, said that it would be unreasonable to expect straight away a school equal to the North London Collegiate Institution, but the proposed high school 'could hardly be modelled after a better'.[9] Personal links with English' educators and the interchange of some staff with English high schools ensured a steady flow of ideas. There was, for instance, Annie Whitelaw from

Auckland, who took the mathematical tripos at Cambridge (which did not yet admit women to degrees) and graduated MA from Trinity College, Dublin. She taught at Wycombe Abbey and became the first Principal of Auckland Girls' Grammar School in 1907.[10] When she returned to be headmistress of Wycombe Abbey, her place was taken by Blanche Butler, MSc, London, whose teaching experience had been in GPDST schools in England.[11] Such reciprocity ensured that, in matters of dress, discipline, school organization, the naming of classes, New Zealand secondary schools kept close to English practice. It was not always a case of following their lead. Otago Girls' High School was one year older than the first of the Girls' Public Day Schools and, along with other New Zealand girls' schools, it can be seen as part of the same development.

In spite of these advances, there was not opportunity for all pupils to go on to secondary schooling in New Zealand at the turn of the century. For a girl leaving primary school, her right to further education was established, but in 1900 only 10 percent of primary school leavers went on to secondary school and of these about 45 percent were girls.[12] Even state secondary schools were not free. There was provision under the Education Reserves Act of 1877 for one-quarter of the education reserves of the former provinces to be used for secondary education.[13] 'Endowed schools' established under this provison had land, the girls' schools rather less than the boys', but they had to charge fees for their running costs. There was some Departmental control over these state secondary schools, but they maintained a certain degree of autonomy, each with its own board of governors. They had no allegiance to regional education boards which, nevertheless, offered competitive free places and scholarships for entry to secondary school, the number and value varying from one education board to another. Of 129 pupils at Otago Girls' High School in 1902, only 29 were not paying fees.[14] By 1903, Christchurch Girls' High School had only 8 free places to offer, 4 junior and 4 senior.[15] The girls, therefore, required determination and encouragement from their teachers if they were to continue their schooling. Parents, who were more likely to spend money on their sons, needed to be convinced of its value if they were to budget or make sacrifices for the education of their daughters.

For those who had such advantages, there were girls' high schools in Napier, Wanganui, Wellington, Nelson, Christchurch,

Timaru, Oamaru and Dunedin. Invercargill's position was unique. A girls' high school was established in 1879 before there was one for boys, perhaps because Southland boys were more commonly sent to boarding school or were expected to enter apprenticeships and the work force.[6] Boys wanting academic subjects were admitted in small numbers to senior classes at Southland Girls' High School. After two years, it became a mixed school under a headmaster (still with a majority of girls), till the Girls' High School was re-established in new buildings as a separate school in 1904. In Auckland, much stubborn prejudice was revealed in the storm that raged over whether girls could rightly be allowed to attend a school that was designated as a 'grammar school' and whether they should be allowed to continue eating into the endowment which, some claimed, was intended for boys only.[7] Auckland Girls' High School was opened in 1877, after some struggles and difficulties the girls were admitted to the Boys' Grammar School in 1888 but were taught separately, and finally, in 1906, they moved into their own buildings and were established as Auckland Girls' Grammar School. In several other towns, the provincial endowments had been used to establish high schools that were co-educational, not so much because of any conviction concerning educational advantage as for reasons of economy and convenience.

In smaller places, both boys and girls could be better off because, from 1901, education at the emerging district high schools was free. Following the Scottish tradition, these schools maintained the ideal of a liberal education for all their pupils, while in the towns a gap was growing between the high schools with their professional courses and the new technical schools with their vocational training.

Several small, privately owned schools disappeared as the state secondary schools developed. The Dame School era had passed and the girls' private schools which survived, mainly those established or purchased from private owners by the churches, broadened their curricula and progressed along similar lines to their English counterparts. Boarding schools, both here and in England, tended to follow the lead of boys' public schools with emphasis on character training and sport. Criticism of boys' schooling, particularly of their sporting activities, has not prevented quiet emulation. These schools had gained strength as, in the last decade of the nineteenth century and even into the twentieth, local controversy, changes in policy

4 Sacred Heart Convent, Wanganui, 1912.

and limited funds continued to affect the growth of state-maintained schools for girls. For country girls, private boarding schools were seen by some parents to have advantages over state schools with hostels attached. A contributing factor to the final closing of the Otago Girls' High School boarding establishment in 1904 was that the number of boarders had dwindled, those who could afford it preferring to send their daughters to private schools.[18] In 1905, the fees for boarders at Christchurch Girls' High School were £36* a year and at Miss Baber's School in Wellington, they were £56.14.0, plus £6.6.0 for laundry and one guinea for a seat in church.[19] Roman Catholic boarding schools, mainly attached to convents,

* As an indication of the value of the pound, the allowable income before tax was deducted was £300, the salary paid to the Treasurer and Chief Clerk of the North Canterbury Hospital Board. The Headmaster of West Christchurch District High School received £357. Under the Education Act of 1904, a junior scholarship for secondary school could not be held by a child whose parents received a net annual income over £250.

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tended to be small and still somewhat secluded from the mainstream of girls' secondary education, but, with an acceptance of austerity and without the burden of staff salaries, they were able to survive on considerably lower fees.

Though there was satisfaction with the growth of secondary schooling for girls, it was a privilege for a few, as it still was for boys.

The beginnings of change came in 1903 when, in an attempt to even out inequality, not only for girls, Seddon's Liberal Government passed the Secondary Schools Act offering two years' secondary schooling to all those who had passed the Proficiency Examination, with the possibility of extension till the age of 17. Neither the public nor the schools rushed to take advantage of the offer. It was viewed with anxiety by the staffs of girls' schools where the curriculum was largely academic. There was pride in the achievements of girls who went on to university, and the syllabus was prescribed by their needs. Newly won privileges were to be protected and, in the national interest, the brightest should survive. Mary Gibson, the Principal of Christchurch Girls' High School, did not wish to see her school used to 'supplement' primary education, saying that 'no diffusion of a smattering of secular education over a larger area would compensate for the loss of a high standard of efficiency'.[20] However, the young and forceful Maria Marchant of Otago Girls' High School had pointed out to her board a few months earlier that a high proportion of girls who entered school never reached the Lower Sixth. She had spoken out against the retention of pupils in Standard VII in primary schools:

> If New Zealand can afford it, let the high schools be free schools, but do not let us pay for the maintenance of high schools with one hand and with the other pay the primary schools to under-sell the secondary.[21]

She doubted the wisdom of devoting the whole time of the most highly paid teachers to the very small number who would sit the University Scholarship Examination. For her, measuring the success of the school by the achievements of a handful of picked scholars was a dubious exercise. Miss Marchant was frustrated by the short stay of many free-place holders, but she was prepared for a wider curriculum. Not so J. W. Tibbs of Auckland Grammar School. He had both boys and girls in his care and for him the number of passes

in the University Scholarship Examination was the criterion of his teaching staff's ability.[22]

The numbers at secondary school increased and there were incentives to open new schools. Providing for the needs of the less academic, either in the high schools or in the new technical schools, was the main curriculum problem. This was true of later periods, but it was a different dilemma when, for a variety of reasons, the majority did not go to secondary school.

Girls' schools and the co-educational high schools were a late development in the western educational heritage: they were, therefore, less bound by a strictly classical tradition. However, the bias was academic and, therefore, to some extent exclusive. Girls were at secondary school perhaps because they showed special aptitude, or because their families valued education, or because their parents could afford to pay for a privilege that was socially acceptable. Though counterbalances may have been at work, keeping check on the advance, the range of intellectual, social and vocational interests for young women was widening. To what extent were secondary schools able to provide for these needs in the context of the curriculum?

4

Essential Latin to Compulsory Home Science

While secondary education remained a privilege which one generation had been denied, there was resistance to underselling the next generation by watering down the academic curriculum. It is pertinent to look at the part girls' schools played in perpetuating the prestige of an academic course. Such a course was considered suitable for those emerging from, or aiming towards, a professional milieu. With changes in commerce and industry, it was recognized that those bound to earn their living in offices and factories might need a different kind of education. There were also attitudes towards what were appropriate subjects for girls within the traditional curriculum. It has been said that the New Zealand secondary school curriculum does not provide much scope for the person seeking signs of discrimination between boys and girls.[1] This may be so as far as the official syllabus is concerned but, in spite of apparent equal opportunity, it has become increasingly clear that the education that girls receive does differ from that of boys.[2] The patterns that were established in the secondary school curriculum during the first quarter of this century were likely to have a major influence on future trends. They serve as a pointer towards the direction of women's participation in social, economic and cultural life.

In New Zealand high schools, girls were being offered a curriculum very similar to that set down by the Girls' Public Day School Company in the 1890s: religious instruction (allowing for differences of denomination), reading, writing, arithmetic, book-keeping, English grammar and literature, history, geography, French and German, the elements of physical science, drawing, class singing and callisthenic exercises. For the seniors, there was more

advanced work in ancient and modern languages, literature, history, mathematics, physical science – with emphasis on physiology as applied to the laws of health – the elements of moral science and logic, and social and domestic economy.[3] Religious and moral studies took a different course in New Zealand, sometimes stubbornly maintained but never an examinable subject. Otherwise the courses were much the same at a school like Christchurch Girls' High School in 1900. This school provides us with a useful example of a school with a dominant academic tradition.

Concessions to the Free Place regulations in the high schools were the inclusion of shorthand and book-keeping as alternatives to academic subjects, and some increase in the amount of cooking and sewing. By 1907, Christchurch Girls' High School had three separate courses, and yearly changes in the non-academic options showed concern for the needs of the new intake. However, with its proud record of examination passes, this school was never comfortable with a diversified curriculum. In 1916, the Principal, Mary Gibson, pointed out that, in the past, girls had come for one or other of two purposes, 'to fit themselves for a proposed professional career, or to acquire a general education suitable for their station in life, but with no very definite aim at an efficiency which would provide a future means of livelihood'.[4] Increasingly, the main professional opening was in teaching and there was some regret that the numbers offering themselves for the prestige profession of medicine had fallen off. Before 1903, eight girls from the Christchurch Girls' High School had taken medical degrees and only one in the years between 1904 and 1915, though the roll had trebled.[5] Perhaps enthusiasm for feminist gains was waning. During the same period, opportunities had begun to boom in shorthand and typewriting, occupations which were declared suitable for girls because they did not demand a great deal of intellect. The fluctuating demands of the market for women's labour had begun to exercise some influence over the secondary curriculum for girls.

Commercial subjects were offered at Christchurch Girls' High School from 1907 but there appears to have been relief when, in 1918, the Board of Governors, faced with a chronic accommodation problem, established a side school at Avonside. In their prospectus, they were then able to direct parents to enrol their daughters at Avonside for a commercial course while maintaining their bias

towards an academic curriculum. This was one way of dealing if only temporarily with the common dilemma of whether or not to provide vocational training.

Secondary schools had some independence in establishing courses, till closer inspection and Departmental controls were introduced in 1920.[6] They were, however, subject to the demands of a complex array of external examinations. From 1903, a girl who had gained her Proficiency was not required to sit a Junior Free Place examination, but she might have sat for an entrance scholarship. In an academic or general course, she would, at the end of her second year, sit the Intermediate Examination for a senior free place and thereafter her energies would be directed towards Matriculation, the goal of secondary school life. She might in some schools have sat the examinations for Public Service Entrance or Teachers' College Entrance.[7] In the year after Matriculation, she could be accredited with a Higher Leaving Certificate, but she might also enter for a University Scholarship. Schools with commercial courses could enter pupils for a variety of certificates. All these examinations had subject requirements and set texts.

A complication which did not bedevil the curriculum for boys was the mounting insistence that, in the interests of national fitness, all girls, whatever their interests, should be trained for home life. In 1913, when rooms for domestic subjects were opened at Christchurch Girls' High School, the chairman voiced the fashionable view that it was a mistake to educate girls similarly to boys: those with training in cooking and dressmaking would find their paths better cut out 'when they had to take up the serious portion of life'.[8] The contribution of Frederick Truby King to this debate, which assumed major proportions, is fully dealt with in Chapter Six. He regarded the vogue for educating boys and girls along similar lines as 'one of the most proposterous farces ever perpetrated'.[9] The campaign had its effects, but there was some determination among teachers that there should be no undermining of the subjects which, most of them felt, led to greater enlightenment and could be offered in open examinations.

English

English had gradually established its place in a liberal curriculum

and was, from the start, at the core of any syllabus designed for girls, though the more traditional boys' schools still gave this place to the classics. English was not on the original curriculum for Christ's College. Girls had an advantage here as it was assumed that they had a literary bent while boys were more likely to develop skills and interests in scientific fields.

Written recollections are always the product of literary people, predisposed to like English at school. They give evidence of inspiration from enthusiastic teachers, several of whom had sat at the feet of John Macmillan Brown at Canterbury College. In his memoirs, Macmillan Brown expressed his preference among the nineteenth century poets for Wordsworth, Tennyson and Browning, probably the most frequently read and memorized poets in girls' schools for the first 50 years of this century. Not all teachers took heed of the best advice in the teaching of poetry: studying abridged literary histories and memorizing criticisms of set works were lazy if convenient shortcuts. 'We listened to an admirable criticism of Tennyson's "Idylls",' an inspector reported, 'by a girl who afterwards confessed that she had not read any part of the poem.'[10]

Such methods would not have been used by Mary King who taught English at Southland Girls' High School before becoming the colourful Principal of Otago Girls' High School (1922-42). Her dramatic renderings of scenes from Shakespeare are remembered as well as her poetry lessons which stirred the imagination, her challenging questions, and her detentions which consisted of the learning of favourite poems or memorizing and acting a Shakespearean scene with fellow delinquents.[11]

Though some headmasters of boys' schools, like Frank Milner of Waitaki, are known to have encouraged literary talents, aesthetic interests generally found more fruitful soil in girls' schools where the urge to 'write' might be given free rein. This pleased the future poet, novelist and journalist, Robin Hyde, at Wellington Girls' College in the early twenties. She was one who on seeing 'the scornful crystal moons, the bluegums straight as masts on the Wellington hills' felt compelled to write about them. A less literary contemporary was not so appreciative of creative opportunities at school.[12]

The reasons given for the teaching of literature were often moral and inspirational. In 1921, a committee on English teaching under

Sir Henry Newbolt claimed that it was 'not just a subject of academic study but one of the chief temples of the human spirit, in which all should worship'.[13] Women had the special task of moral influence over men and children, and much of the literature selected (or expurgated) for their consumption was intended to have an uplifting quality.

Alexander Wilson, Rector of Otago Girls' High School (1885-95) and later of the Boys' High School, gave different reasons in his presidential address to the Otago Branch of the New Zealand Educational Institute in 1905 on 'The Education of Girls'. He saw that the study of literature would give girls some training in logic which they were traditionally believed to lack. He regarded a thorough knowledge of her own language as a last 'crown and ornament' of a girl's education, suggesting the study of vocabulary and history of the language 'so that she may also do her best to hasten that perfectly possible millenium when every woman will treat the Queen's English as they ought to treat all things noble and royal'.[14] Queen Victoria had died, but her era lived on. The modifying influence that women might have on men's manners and language had been optimistically presented as a case for women's penetration into male institutions, particularly into the houses of parliament.

Perception of style should be encouraged, but not fine writing: 'she must detest fine writing as she would artificial flowers'. A sense of fitness would enable a girl with a fine eye to become a discerner of truth and falsehood in other things. Here, he was warning against the seductive power of words and emphasizing what he called the 'moral quality' of style.

Examination requirements nearly always included a Shakespeare play and a Victorian novel. In the towns, there were performances of Shakespeare by amateur groups, travelling companies or solo actors. However, a scholarship candidate writing to the press struck a note of warning:

> Any candidate who thought that a thorough and complete knowledge of English might be obtained by studying such classics as Shakespeare finds, when the examination comes round, that he is outclassed by the enterprising student who can reproduce Nesfield, footnotes and all.[15]

It was believed that mastery of grammar would induce

correctness in writing as well as in speech. In girls' schools, polite speech, with pronunciation as near as possible to that of a distant motherland, was strenuously encouraged. Mnemonics composed for speech training might be chorused by a whole school after assembly: 'What is the name of the lake in the park?'[16] was designed to correct the abhorred colonial distortion of vowels.

Girls at high school were generally given good measure in various branches of English so as to cultivate their tastes, to furnish them with a source of moral inspiration for their task in life and to provide them with a grounding in correctness. Grammar was important to them because nearly all girls at secondary school took another language apart from English.

Languages

In the early years of secondary education for girls, there was glamour in studying Latin, in penetrating the mysteries that had surrounded a male territory of knowledge. Some of the women graduates who taught Latin were fired with a double enthusiasm for their subject. There was the intrinsic interest of the language and literature of the ancients, and it was a symbol of equality in higher education. Only a few had ignored the prejudice that discouraged them from tasting the pagan delights of Greek, the only subject which, from the start, was officially considered unsuitable for girls.[17] Latin, on the other hand, was supposed to train the mind in habits of logic. It appeared on the curriculum of nearly all high schools and district high schools in spite of criticism from liberal educationists. Departmental influence was blamed for the discouragement of the more general study of Latin. According to the Free Place regulations, no pupil could be compelled to take it, and some schools had to modify their courses.

At first, Latin was taken by all girls (except the primary classes) at Christchurch Girls' High School, as it was at several other girls' secondary schools. Senior classes had studied the subject up to BA level and there was regret as the initial enthusiasm and high standard began to weaken. However, it could still be claimed that 'among the select few of the Sixth Forms' there was 'a real appreciation of the glorious jewels of literature of Imperial Rome'.[18]

Many would not have reached these heights: for them, Latin meant formal exercises with much memorizing of declensions and grammar rules. However, direct-method teaching was not unknown. Miss Hetherington, later to influence language teaching in New Zealand as lecturer and inspector, was impressed by demonstration classes she attended while assistant lecturer at Cambridge in 1913. No English was used, and she was given the name of Erica (Heather), a practice which has continued to enliven third form Latin classes in some New Zealand schools.[19]

The accepted reasons for studying Latin at the time were that it was a mental discipline, it was a key to European languages, and it unlocked the door to professions which demanded university degrees.

Learning French was considered less exacting as a mental discipline, but it had long been accepted as a social grace, suitable for young ladies. This view was wholly adopted from the English girls' school tradition, even to the extent of employing, where possible, native speakers of French, in spite of the obvious difficulties. In fiction, the mam'selle on the school staff is often the focus of blind adoration or ill-considered humour. In New Zealand, she brought a whiff of the exotic, whether she measured up to the romantic image or not.

The Ladies' College at Remuera advertised French 'taught by Parisiennes' and they had a certain Mme Albigiani who 'used to read French stories very slowly to the girls while they sewed and tried to follow her words'.[20] Muriel May (Principal of Southland Girls' High School, 1940-54) found French exciting. The French mistress at Otago Girls' High School at the time had studied in Brussels.

> Do you realize what that meant? Brussels. She had been in the same town, walked the same streets as Charlotte Bronte. In summer she wore a linen suit of pale salmon pink. So this was the meaning of 'well cut'.[21]

This school thus advertised the opportunity of conversation with a teacher just returned from France, as an attraction for boarders. Even with limited travel opportunities, it was possible for a young New Zealand woman to go to France, to stay in a respectable French household or *pension* and to attend some of the courses which French universities, including the Sorbonne, have long run for foreign students. She could then apply to teach French in a girls' school

which was likely to stipulate in an advertisement that the applicant 'must have lived in France and have a thorough knowledge of French literature'. This did not produce large numbers of French conversationalists in New Zealand schools but it did mean that, in girls' schools, there were often teachers better prepared in French than in other subjects. Some had real skill and enthusiasm. Such a person was Kathleen Gresson, MA, *Dip. de la Sorbonne et de la Guilde Int.*, who joined the Christchurch Girls' High School staff in 1897 and, in 1918, was appointed as Principal of Avonside Girls' High School. She held a French club on Saturday afternoons and it was claimed that girls 'learned to speak and read French as naturally as any foreign tongue could be mastered'.[22] French plays were performed regularly and there was emphasis on phonetics.

In spite of such efforts, inspectors still complained of the formal teaching methods in languages, and the introduction of an oral examination was advocated. One inspector tried to account for what he recognized as a 'hostile attitude' among boys, particularly as they grew older, to the acquisition of foreign sounds. 'With girls this is not apparent,' he said, suggesting as a possible remedy the use of phonetics.[23]

French was considered suitable not only for the academic girls but also for those taking the new general courses. Those not intending to go to university could take a course in which more attention was given to 'modern languages', and a conversational French class was sometimes offered to those who did not take Latin.

'Modern languages' were expansively offered, but there is no evidence that such largesse was practised. In the regulations, following the Education Act of 1877, the curriculum for district high schools included 'all branches of a liberal curriculum comprising Latin and Greek classics, French and other modern languages'.[24] In the original syllabus for Christchurch Girls' High School, Latin and French were offered, and Greek and German, it was said, would be introduced when there was sufficient demand. Private schools were to the fore in the richness of their offerings, but some of their subjects, including French conversation, could appear as extras on the bill. The original advertisement for the young ladies' boarding and high school which the Sisters of Mercy opened at Lyttelton stated that they taught 'French, German, Italian and other languages'.[25]

French still enjoyed its position as the international language of diplomacy, but there were those who strongly criticized the practice of giving prominence to French in schools so far away from opportunities to use the language. In 1917, it was taken by 92 percent of the girls and 83 percent of the boys at secondary school.[26]

History and Geography

History and Geography were sometimes regarded as the neglected subjects. In secondary schools, they were likely to be alternatives to one another, to Latin or to physical science.

British and colonial history figured in the early prospectuses of girls' schools. For the Intermediate Examination sat in the second year at high school in order to maintain a senior free place, British history from 1757 to 1900 AD was the requirement, and the standard was what could reasonably be expected in two hours of lessons a week for two years. It carried only 200 marks compared with 400 for each language and 300 for book-keeping and commercial correspondence.[27] As it was encouraged in courses for girls, they were sometimes at a disadvantage in the competitive examination. This kind of hidden discrimination was allowed to persist for some time with little comment.

Concern that schools should prepare pupils to be informed and responsible citizens led, in 1916, to regulations making history and civics compulsory in the first two years at secondary school.[28] An increasing number of girls chose to continue with history, undeterred by the preoccupation of the history books with high adventure and political intrigue which only men were free to experience.

History, as an examination subject, has undergone immense fluctuations in popularity. In schools where choice has been possible, it appears that girls have been more likely than boys to choose a subject either because they enjoyed it or because they liked the teacher. In an English survey of girls' schools in all parts of the country in 1980, nearly two-thirds said that a motivating factor in choosing a subject was, at least in part, 'the teacher who taught it'.[29] Such partisan selection of subjects has caused time-tabling problems in girls' schools, particularly in history and geography.

Where language teachers were required to be qualified in some

way, history suffered from the notion that anyone could teach it. However, there were some outstanding history teachers in girls' schools, particularly among the steady stream of teachers coming out from England. Such a person was Stephanie Young who, having completed the History Tripos at Lady Margaret Hall, brought a fresh approach to her subject. She set up a history classroom at Christchurch Girls' High School in the early 1920s and, as far as possible, encouraged methods of research.[30]

Civic responsibility was taught from textbooks which, like the primary school readers, emphasized the might of the British Empire. They were no doubt inspirational at the time, but distance throws a sad, ironic light on emotive invocations, such as this from George Borrow, appearing in a book used in New Zealand schools well into the 1920s:

> O, England, long, long may it be ere the sun of thy glory sink beneath the wave of darkness. . . . may thou sink, if thou dost sink, amid blood and flame, with a mighty noise, causing more than one nation to participate in thy downfall. Of all fates, may it please the Lord to preserve thee from a disgraceful and slow decay.[31]

A more useful, comprehensive and informative book was *The New Zealand Citizen* by E. K. and Alan E. Mulgan. The writers warn against the abuse of patriotism though they uphold the ideals of Empire. In a chapter on war and arbitration, there is still the forlorn hope, in 1914 (the year of publication), that war may be averted. 'Many wars have been due to ignoble causes, such as the ambition or greed of monarchs and the prejudice and greed of peoples. A true democracy, wisely governed, can banish such causes.'[32] The only particular reference to the concerns of women in this book is that they and their children suffer more than men when workers go out on strike.[33]

The fact that they did not appear in textbooks did not mean that controversial women's affairs were absent from class discussion and debate. A debating club was started at Christchurch Girls' High School in 1912 with topics of current concern: 'That a domestic career is the most suitable for a woman', 'That women should receive for equal work the same salaries as men', and 'That women should have the right of sitting in Parliament'.[34] There was a lively interest in the activities of English women suffragists and, in 1914, they debated whether militant suffragettes should be deported from England. In

the magazine of Girton College, Christchurch, published in the summer of 1912, appears a playlet in which two girls 'discovered on a sofa' voice their opposing views on the suffragettes:

> *Peggy*: . . . it ought to be a privilege to have the vote; but they will not get it till they leave off breaking windows and throwing stones and hatchets.
>
> *Sylvie* (warmly): If I were in London I would be among all those women who are doing so much good for the cause . . . I would break as many windows as I wanted to, and fight as many policemen as I liked and I would –
>
> *Peggy*: You seem to forget when you speak of 'women's rights' that we live in New Zealand where we have everything – even 'votes for women'.[35]

Such consciousness of women's affairs was no doubt stronger and aired more freely in the single sex girls' schools than in the mixed high schools.

Geography in the secondary school was thought of at first as a 'masculine' subject. A type of geography had certainly been taught in the Dame School, and it was later to become a very popular choice for girls. During the first quarter of this century, it was placed with mathematics, the physical sciences and drawing as one of the subjects which boys could do better than girls.[36] It was often an alternative to Latin and therefore taken by the less academic, and where it was coupled with history it seems to have been the less popular option.

The definition of geography has undergone so much change that what was taught in the early 1900s could almost be a different subject. New Zealand itself provided a rich field for the study of physical geography. This was a major part of the curriculum though there was a strong move to orientate the subject more towards the relationship of people to their environment.

All girls at secondary school were exposed to some teaching in history and civics and increasing numbers were taking geography. It was possible to teach these subjects factually and impersonally but there was scope for teachers, either consciously or otherwise, to influence the values of their pupils. The personal influence of women teachers over the girls they taught was sometimes strong, particularly in senior classes. We can only speculate now as to whether women teachers early in the century saw the teaching of

the 'new humanities' as an opportunity for their pupils to question and consider the position of women in society.

Mathematics and Science

One reason for the limited achievement of girls in mathematics was undoubtedly the lack of qualified teachers and the vicious circle that was therefore perpetuated. Still more effective in holding them back were assumptions, first that girls would find the subject difficult, and secondly that it would be of little practical value to them. The first of these assumptions could have set up barriers of mystification and fear;[37] the second reinforced the view that women's interests should be limited to the domestic. Cautious attempts were made to break down these barriers. 'Of course I know,' said Alexander Wilson in 1905, advocating the study of full mathematics for girls,

> that geometry and algebra cannot be made to serve any practical use in cookery or dressmaking and that therefore mathematics may seem to some practical people a useless study for girls; but I am speaking to a gathering of teachers and need not emphasize the short-sightedness of this view.[38]

With hindsight, and with the benefit of recent studies into girls' performance in mathematics, it is possible to recognize some of the more or less subtle influences which have reinforced girls' sense of inferiority in this subject.

Much discussion in the early years of the century centred on whether or not girls should have an alternative examination. Such a move would not have pleased Emily Davies who, in her earlier campaign for higher education for women in England, would brook no modification whatever in their conditions of entry. She could see no reason why women's studies should be limited:

> Women are expected to learn *something* of arithmetical science, and who should say at what point they are to stop? Why should simple equations brighten their intellects, and quadratic equations drive them into the lunatic asylum?[39]

Always trenchant in her comments and uncompromising in her opinions, she had her opponents.

By and large, there was support for her views by principals of girls' schools in New Zealand, and Mary McLean, giving evidence

before the Cohen Commission in 1912, took a stand against easier academic options for girls:

> I should be sorry to see [she said] some suggestions to the Commission bearing fruit, as, for example, that mathematics and physics, the only exact sciences taken by us, should not be subjects for girls in the Junior Scholarship Examination. The tendency would be for these subjects to be undervalued and discontinued in the higher forms. If such a retrograde measure were adopted it would be looked on as a calamity by the Principals of girls' schools, though they are quite aware that these subjects are not as useful for girls as for boys in after-life.[40]

However, at the Matriculation level, an alternative which made it easy for girls not to take mathematics was introduced. From 1919, girls taking home science could present arithmetic instead of full mathematics.[41] The option was there too for boys taking agriculture, but it was less often used. At the time, it seemed a benign regulation, giving more girls a chance. The effect of this option was that, in some of the smaller schools, particularly private schools, and in some courses at the larger schools, arithmetic only was offered. The practice, which persisted till 1943, hardened the attitude that girls were less able in mathematics and would have less use for the subject. It meant that there were two levels of matriculation, a pass which included mathematics holding the higher prestige.

The very high performance of some girls in competition with boys did little to dispel limited views concerning girls' capabilities. In 1900, two Auckland Grammar School girls gained University Junior Scholarships: one was Hilda Northcroft, later to distinguish herself in medicine at the University of Edinburgh, and the other was Isabel Robertson who gained the highest marks in New Zealand. At the time, J. W. Tibbs, their headmaster, pointed out that, from the time of his taking office in 1894, 10 of the 15 university scholarship winners had been girls, a sign, he felt, that girls displayed greater zeal.[42] The next year, a girl again topped the list, this time, Mary King of Waitaki Girls' High School.[43] Five girls from Christchurch Girls' High School were awarded junior university scholarships in 1907 and, in 1915, a pupil from the same school gained 96 percent, the highest marks in mathematics for that year.[44] To these isolated examples, which, in themselves, prove little, could be added more. The public would have known of these achievements as it was the

fashion for schools to parade their successes in the press. Yet it was still a common view that girls lacked the innate ability to cope with mathematics.

The real problems which many girls experienced in mathematics were largely accepted as gender differences to be dealt with expediently. On this basis, girls were debarred from experience in related subjects such as geometrical drawing and physical science. There appears, at the same time, to have been a confirmation of the parental attitudes and socializing factors to which later research has attributed something of the lower performance of girls in mathematics.[45] American studies of 'mathophobia' have more recently sought reasons for the kind of fear that has haunted schoolgirls.

For many parents, the experience of having daughters at secondary school was a new one, and they were easy prey to the fear that too much mental exertion on mathematics would be mentally and physically debilitating and possibly de-sexing.

One of the reasons that girls were not given more opportunity in the physical sciences was certainly economic. Endowments for girls' schools were small or non-existent and budgets were tight. Subjects requiring equipment had to be discouraged. Botany could be taught outside or in a classroom with 'a microscope, a razor and a few slides'.[46] What is more, it had possibilities as a creative, artistic subject, it stimulated awareness and a sense of wonder; less dangerous than chemistry, less obscure than physics, it was therefore more suited to feminine needs. The fact that, vocationally, it was not a useful subject unless it was taken in conjunction with mathematics or another science was ignored. First as botany, and later as biology, it became firmly established in girls' schools and as a convenient option for girls in co-educational schools.[47] Those in smaller mixed high schools, where there was no need to divide classes according to sex, had the advantage.

There were, however, some opportunities for physical science in the upper classes in girls' schools, with varying conditions. Otago Girls' High School offered some physics and chemistry from the start. At Christchurch Girls' High School, mechanics as a sixth form subject had appeared on the original prospectus and was replaced by elementary heat in 1898.[48] Till 1908, what the Board regarded as necessary appliances for the teaching of practical science consisted

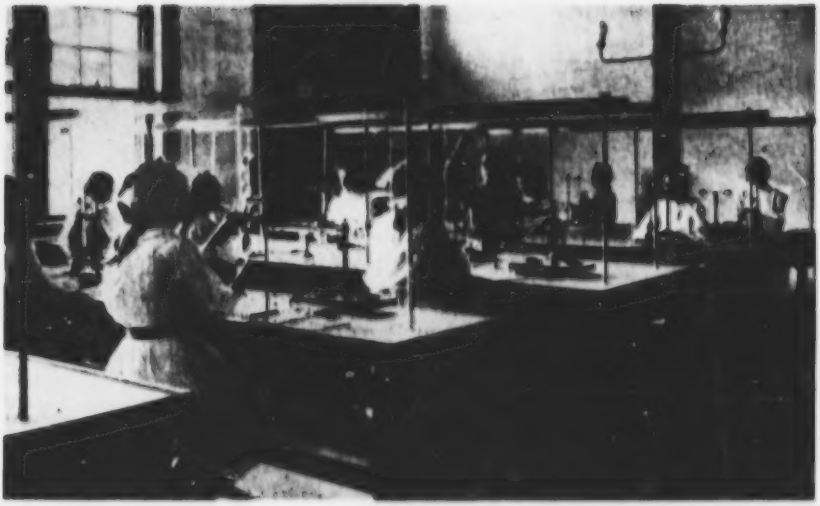
of one little bench in the corner of the lunch room, two gas burners and a small cupboard.[49] At Auckland Girls' Grammar School, there was a different scene. A photograph taken in 1909 shows a class of girls in a well-planned physics room, each with her own equipment on the bench in front of her, following a demonstrated lesson in physical measurement.[50] An exercise book of a few years later shows meticulous diagrams of experiments in physics.[51]

Women teachers appear to have been more inclined than men to encourage the painstaking presentation of neat notes and drawings in science subjects. The propensity of girls to spend time on such details could have accounted for their failure to advance in science, or, it seems, it may have provided them with an escape from coming to grips with difficulties.[52]

It is easy to write about inadequacies in the teaching of girls and to ignore the fact that boys might have had equally unsatisfactory experiences. Dr F. O. Bennett records that he was so ill-prepared by his primary school for general science in the Education Board scholarship test that he unwittingly answered the easy domestic questions in the girls' optional section. He was not much better off at Timaru Boys' High School in its heyday under William Thomas where, he claims, no science was taught up to matriculation level except agriculture which was a bait for farmers' sons.[53]

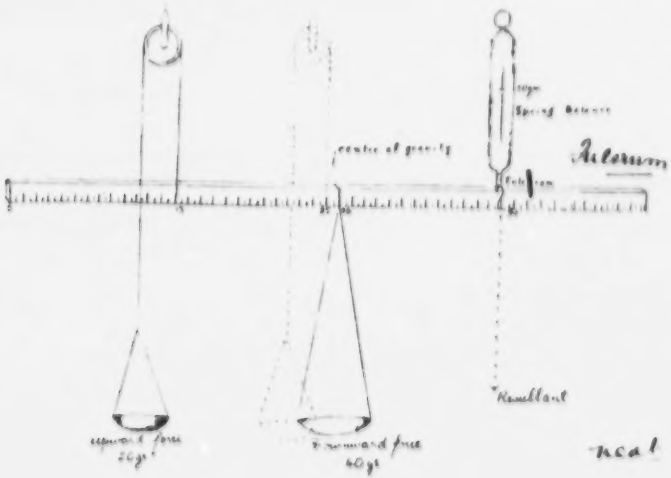
Physiology and hygiene were subjects that received uneven treatment, though they appeared in one form or another in most courses for girls. Physiology was, for some years, an alternative to botany at Christchurch Girls' High School. Textbooks used in the first two decades of the century managed with surprising skill to skirt around topics that might be considered indelicate. To concentrate on Latin terminology (the 'osseous system' for bones, and 'philanges' for fingers) was one way of distancing the subject from the personal, and the use of analogies enabled the teacher to evade the more vulgar reality. A lesson on excretions could safely be introduced with the example of the steam engine producing the waste products of steam, smoke and ashes.

The question of teaching 'sex physiology' was seriously considered, but discussion of the topic was equally shrouded in analogy and imagery. Dr George Home of New Plymouth made a submission to the Cohen Commission on the topic, and the substance of his paper appeared as an article in the *Otago Daily Times*.



5 *Physics class at Auckland Girls' Grammar School, 1909.*

6 *Diagram of physics experiment in pupil's exercise book, 1918.*



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As well as important reasons for teaching this 'perfectly wholesome subject', he offered a model lesson of instruction. Simply and eloquently, he proceeded from the division of a cell to the fertilization of lilies where he introduced the terms 'male or father part' and 'female or mother part' and moved on to fish, to birds, to human beings. At each step, he became a little less explicit and when he came to the birds he gave up explaining how the male fertilizes the female egg. He saw the schools as having to take the responsibility until a generation of parents emerged with 'more wholesome attitudes' and recognized the special needs of girls because the possible results of ignorance were 'more lasting and terrible'.[54]

The Women's Christian Temperance Union supported the teaching of physiology in schools because most parents were incapable 'of teaching the physiology of reproduction with scientific accuracy and chaste language'. It was suggested that teachers should do so in 'just the same straightforward unembarrassed way in which they teach the other natural sciences'.[55]

Social change, fashion and recent scientific knowledge were not always recognized in textbooks on hygiene. Into the 1920s, some girls up to the fifth form were still taught from a book published in 1896 and twice revised. The advice on clothing illustrates something of the protectiveness and restriction to which girls were subjected in spite of the advances of the New Woman of the turn of the century. Girls were informed:

> The body should first be covered by a layer of flannel reaching to the neck and thoroughly protecting the arms and legs . . . stockings should be of wool, reaching above the knees, and should not be fastened by garters, but should be suspended to the garment above. The second layer of clothes should consist of a corset bodice, made to fit the figure of the body (with the narrowest part low down) and not the body to fit the corset . . . The heavy flannel petticoat may be dispensed with, and the legs should be covered by a pair of knickerbockers, made of light or heavy cloth depending on the season, shaped much like those worn by a man, and buttoned loosely at the knee . . . The bottom of the skirt should be well above the ground, as is the sensible fashion at present . . . shoes, generally better than boots, must be made to fit the foot and not *vice versa*.[56]

Hygiene and physiology were necessary for girls in their nurturing role, and formed an important part of the composite science subject that was designed to suit their needs.

The whole question of the development of home-related subjects and the public concerns that surrounded them will be dealt with in later chapters. At this point, the introduction of home science as an examination subject is of special significance. It marked a major divergence in the curriculum for girls. The possibility of developing a course which would include a scientific approach to domestic training had been simmering for some time. The School of Home Science, established in Dunedin in 1911, had given the subject university status and there was little ground for opposing its inclusion even in an academic course for girls at school. When action came, it was rapid and decisive.

Home Science was introduced as a subject for the Public Service and Intermediate Examinations in 1914.[57] This was the first step in official action by which home science became compulsory for all girls during their first two years at secondary school and virtually replaced all other teaching of science, except botany, below the sixth form. The General Council of Education, set up as an advisory body in 1915, appointed a recess committee of four men and four women to consider the curriculum for girls. On 9 September 1916, their report recommended differentiation. On 26 March 1917, a circular from the Education Department went out to the secretaries of high school boards:

> I am directed by the Minister of Education to inform you that he desires that a course of domestic training should be undertaken in every secondary school for girls.[58]

By July 1917, the Free Place Regulations, Clause 6, had been amended to ensure that, during the tenure of a junior free place, home science should be taken by every girl attending a secondary or a district high school unless it was shown to the satisfaction of the Minister that adequate provision for instruction could not be made.[59] The prescription was for 'elementary science related to the home and domestic hygiene'.[60]

So that there should be no misunderstanding of the regulations, a circular was sent out in June of the following year informing secondary schools that all girls were required to take a course in home science in association with one or more branches of homecraft under the general term Home Science. They were warned against concentrating on the examinable aspects of the subject which, they

were reminded, was not to be confused with home science which could be offered for Intermediate, Public Service and Matriculation examinations, although the subjects were not mutually exclusive.[61] The fact that principals were responsible for developing a scheme and forwarding a copy to the department did not safeguard against confusion. Some continued to concentrate on the matriculation syllabus. The university required a certificate that all girls matriculating had taken a course in home science, and subject groupings were such that those not taking Latin were required to pass the examination.[62]

Opposition to the changes had come from various quarters including the headmistresses of non-departmental schools who saw the syllabus as already over-burdened and objected that girls, obliged to take home science, would be disadvantaged in entering professions which required scientific training.[63] The Women's Social Investigation League and the Secondary School Teachers' Association also registered their dissatisfaction.[64] The Wellington Women Teachers' Association had objected on the grounds that the needs of boys and girls with regard to general education were exactly the same and classification should be made according to ability and special aptitude, not according to sex.[65]

After the implementation of the regulations, there was criticism on the one hand that girls were being given a watered-down, domestically orientated scientific training and, on the other, that the new subject was still being taught as chemistry. Either girls were disadvantaged if they wanted science for a career, or they were being ill-prepared for their domestic future. Girls taking university science subjects often had to seek extra help: the first year was daunting, especially where their course demanded physics.

Though the secondary school curriculum drew from and kept close to the English example, it seems that, in the move to make home science the major science subject for girls, New Zealand was choosing its own course. In discussion of the curriculum for girls in England, the inclusion of domestic crafts was favoured, but what one authority called the 'bastardizing' of science was not.

Secondary schoolgirls and their teachers were to live for a long time with this curriculum decision which, by establishing the pattern of different science courses for girls, reinforced the belief that they were less likely to achieve and made it difficult for them to do so.

They were doomed to live as the poor sisters in an increasingly scientific and technical world.

The Question of Differentiation

Even within the established secondary school subjects – English, languages, history and geography, the sciences and mathematics – there was scope for providing options and emphases which differentiated the curriculum for girls from that provided for boys.

Increasing rolls and changing employment patterns brought criticism of the purely academic curriculum. However, the dominance of traditional courses over the new vocational subjects and the continuing weight given to languages in girls' schools is shown in the following table of courses taken at secondary school in 1917:

Percentages of boys and girls taking courses at secondary schools roughly classified, based on 1917 returns[66]

	Boys	Girls
General or professional	55	44
Non-Latin	11	32
Non-French	2	–
Commercial	24	18
Agricultural	8	–
Domestic	–	6

The syllabus was still largely geared towards examinations which very few were sitting.

The pattern persisted in spite of vigorous questioning of the appropriateness of an academic course for girls. The Cohen Commission gave headmistresses of girls' schools a chance to defend their intention to maintain a high level in academic subjects, while they searched for suitable alternatives for those with different needs. The recess committee, which the General Council of Education set up to investigate the education of girls, addressed itself to the task of reconciling the claims of general and vocational education.[67]

They were in favour of modifying the curriculum, and among their recommendations were the lightening of University Scholarship requirements for girls and greater provision for domestic and aesthetic subjects.[68]

Identifying the special needs of girls was also the task of a consultative committee set up in England under the chairmanship of W. H. Hadow. The report, which appeared in 1923, covers the whole range of attitudes towards the secondary schooling of girls. The curriculum for girls, they pointed out, was still in the experimental stage after only 60 years of practice. They attributed partly to tradition the failure of girls to do as well as boys in classics and mathematics and the tendency of girls' schools to emphasize English subjects and modern languages.[69] The new if untried findings of psychological tests, carried out by experts including Dr Cyril Burt, provided evidence that the capacity for learning was the same, or nearly the same, in the two sexes and that the bearing of psychological conclusions upon sex differentiation in the curriculum was slight.[70] In general, the report recommended flexibility, stating that girls should be allowed to pursue the same curriculum as boys if they so wished, but counterbalancing this suggestion by proposing ways in which the strain on girls at secondary school could be lightened.

The same ambivalence is evident in discussions on the question of curriculum differences in New Zealand. Though public demand and official decisions seem to have been responsible for some developments, the principals themselves carried weight in determining what was provided in girls' schools. They claimed that neither their buildings nor their staff were equipped to meet the needs of increasing numbers of pupils who were not likely to benefit from an academic course. Although by 1925 about a quarter of the women teachers in secondary schools had some sort of training through the primary system,[71] it was graduates with a love of their subject who were most in demand. They had an interest in maintaining the prestige of the professional course which enabled the city girls' high schools to operate selectively on an intellectual as well as on a social level. Even in the high schools with no selection and in the technical schools, there were incentives to make matriculation the respectable goal. The independent schools aimed at providing the same academic opportunities while relying more

on social prestige or, particularly in the case of the Roman Catholic schools, on church affiliation, for their intake.

Alternatives for short-stay pupils and the less academic were offered, sometimes intermittently and with fluctuating enthusiasm. There was concern that girls should not be disadvantaged in competition with boys, but the academic opportunities provided for them were not identical. The home science requirements acted as a reminder that all girls were expected to look to their vocation as home makers whatever other ambitions they might entertain.

5

Town and Country

Co-education in the City

It became apparent that the democratic ideal was not likely to be realized either by extending the existing high schools or by reproducing their kind. In the cities, it was doubtful whether they were reaching out beyond the families of professional and white collar workers who already had some experience of the value of education. Such families seem to have been the mainstay of schools like Christchurch Girls' High School.

An alternative for girls in Christchurch from 1904 was to attend the West Christchurch District High School which was established after a good deal of political agitation in the city. Parents complained that their children were being excluded from the high schools. They were at a disadvantage compared with country boys and girls who, increasingly, had access to district high schools where secondary classes were attached to an existing primary school. To have a city school organized in this way was unique but it satisfied the demands of parents of liberal persuasion who provided the school with a strong body of support. The Prime Minister, the Rt Hon. R. J. Seddon, supported the scheme and was a welcome guest at the opening.[1]

This was, at the time, the only co-educational secondary school in Christchurch. There was very little interest in the theory of co-education at secondary level. In country towns, where there were mixed high schools, limited numbers decided the matter. Professor Macmillan Brown gave his views in the press. He said that at adolescence co-education should cease:

> the boys should be dealt with by masculine will and masculine methods,

> whilst at the dawn of sexual consciousness and the turning point of character, the girl should have the woman teacher's instinct to guide and influence her.[2]

In 1909, there was a suggestion that Wellington College should become co-educational in order to keep out free place pupils, but the feelings of one board member, that no parent would care to send his daughters to be taught 'among a lot of boys', seem to have carried the day.[3]

Girls did not go in large numbers to West Christchurch and it seems fair to say that the school was more geared to the needs of boys who, for many years, formed two-thirds of the total roll.[4] Locality and the convenience of carrying on from primary school in the same place determined the choice for some. However, there were parents whose political and social views led them conscientiously to choose co-education. 'It was because of my father's political outlook that I went to West Christchurch,' recalls a former pupil who graduated from Standard VI in 1910. 'My cousins went to Girls' High, and I'd much rather have gone there.' Supporters of co-education quoted Scottish and American practice. What pupils received at West Christchurch was in fact a highly modified form of co-education. Girls came in by the Girls' Entrance, were taught separately and had a separate playground. This segregation was rigidly enforced and a girl was threatened with expulsion for talking to a boy as she crossed the playground, going about her regular task as the inkwell-filling monitress.

Teaching conditions must at times have taxed the tempers of the most tolerant. It seems that girls were given second best. Even the commercial course appears to have been designed 'chiefly for boys',[6] but there was a girls' commercial class, which absorbed all those with no flair or liking for a foreign language and was taught in a room in the infant department, thus accentuating their feeling of being second-class citizens. There were frustrations over equipment: it was apparently easier to extract a subsidy for a boys' bicycle stand than for a typewriter for the girls' classes.[7]

There were compensations. Some classes, such as English, might provide endless pleasure for willing pupils, and class singing, taught by a tone-deaf teacher with a tuning fork, some hilarity. Shorthand and typewriting were well taught so that girls felt themselves sufficiently prepared for the office work that attracted them. The

school accepted that many would not stay beyond two years, courses were designed with this in mind and pressure was reduced. The intention was, at first, to resist the need to conform to university entrance requirements. Though Public Service Entrance remained the goal for most, the demand for matriculation classes came early and had to be met.[8] According to school jubilee records, men made their way to fame under these conditions but no conspicuous achievements of women are recorded.

Gradually the school adopted the functions of a full, composite high school, though it did not gain this status till 1936. It came to represent a form of secondary education highly favoured in New Zealand – a mixed school with a variety of courses, academic opportunity without pressure, a representative intake and a sense of being a democratic institution. It therefore served the needs of growing numbers of Christchurch girls.

Living Subjects

While there were doubts about whether girls should follow the same academic curriculum as boys, it was certain that, in technical education, their courses should be different. The vocational purpose of technical education for boys was clear. In looking at the provisions for girls as technical education developed and was established at Christchurch Technical College, we may ask to what extent the curriculum offered to girls was truly pre-vocational and, at the same time, meeting the needs of those not seeking academic goals.

Industrial education was already well advanced in Europe, particularly in Germany, when the Manual and Technical Instruction Bill was introduced in Wellington in 1900. Debate on the bill revealed anxiety that England and her colonies might be losing their supremacy. The English workman needed to improve his skills but England's glory was also being threatened by 'the want of thrifty habits in the English housewife'.[9] This was the only reference to women at this stage of the debate. However, women's organizations were already active in promoting technical classes for girls. The Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) saw training in useful skills as a way of combating 'larrikinism' among boys and its counterpart among girls. In Dunedin, where industrial problems

were greatest, they provided courses in dressmaking, cookery, tailoring and carpentry which filled a gap before the establishment of technical courses.[10] Women concerned about conditions in factories and the clothing trade had formed groups linked with the international movement of industrial unionism, particularly with the Knights of Labour.[11] The workers themselves, speaking through the unions, became supporters of technical education. A speaker for a short-lived Domestic Helpers' Union in Christchurch saw the two sexes as working together towards a more complete system of education than could emerge from 'the present one-sided method', and encouraged support for the new technical college.[12]

Under the Manual and Technical Instruction Act, subsidies for technical classes could be paid to approved bodies such as technical associations, Mechanics Institutes and school boards. In Christchurch, as in other areas, local citizens and employers were involved in organizing such classes before the day school started. From 1895, a very efficient School of Domestic Instruction provided classes in cookery and dressmaking: it functioned with a small public subscription subsidized by a government grant. After 1900, this school received capitation grants for school classes and courses for teachers, a number of whom entered the annual examinations for certificates of the City and Guilds of London. A local committee of ladies acted as examiners.[13] When in 1903 the free place provisions were extended to technical education and the way was paved for technical day schools, there was no suggestion of competing with this well-respected institution.

In 1906, J. H. Howell was appointed as Director of the new Christchurch Technical School which was to open in the following year with almost equal numbers of girls and boys. Such schools had already been established in Wellington in 1905 and in Auckland in 1906. Howell was a great liberal educationist who firmly believed in co-education, acknowledging its risks but convinced of its possibilities.[14] He was wise enough to enlist on the girls' side the help of Elizabeth Gard'ner, the Director of the School of Domestic Instruction. She was a remarkable woman of gentle and cosmopolitan background, dedicated to the advancement of domestic training. For the first year, girls at the technical school went to her institution for cooking classes and, in 1908, the School of Domestic Instruction came under the wing of the Technical College

7 Cooking class at Christchurch Technical School, early 1900s.

8 Typewriting class at Wanganui Technical School, 1923.

Board of Governors, with Mrs Gard'ner as head of the domestic science department. Three years later, a move to specially constructed classrooms brought to an end a long struggle with inadequate accommodation, part of the time in a rat-ridden converted warehouse.[15]

The syllabus for all pupils at the Technical College was, in the first year, intended to be a continuation of Standard VI subjects with special attention paid to practical work in elementary science for both sexes and manual training in woodwork and metalwork for boys and in cooking and advanced plain needlework for girls. It was envisaged that every course would provide a sound secondary education as well as vocational training. Pupils would be expected to spend a third of their time in practical work.[16] As courses became established, pupils at all levels had English, social studies, arithmetic and account-keeping. Boys, but not girls, could take mathematics, and girls were offered elementary science and hygiene. It was not intended to offer a language. In a leader welcoming the proposal for the new technical school, *the Lyttelton Times* echoed some public feeling on the subject of language teaching: 'All secondary schools in the country could well afford to give less time to dead languages and more to living subjects.'[17] Howell set forth his own views in the prospectus, stating that the commercial and industrial conditions of New Zealand very rarely call for the use of languages. The emphasis was on preparing for future work, and those requiring languages for degrees could take evening classes.[18] It was reluctantly that he eventually allowed French into the syllabus.

Future work for girls did not always mean employment and this was reflected in the teaching of domestic subjects. Cooking classes learnt to make plain, economical dishes, suitable for a family, and not skills which they might use in the catering trade. Similarly, in needlework and dresscutting, they learnt to make boys' and men's shirts, women's and children's undergarments, cottage pinafores, babies' dresses in cream nun's veiling as well as patching and darning garments and table linen.[19] Millinery, an immensely popular subject, allowed for more creative flair while the elaborate decorated hats of Edwardian times were in vogue. It is likely, too, that this was a marketable training for some years. In 1901, there were 10,229 women employed as dressmakers and milliners and, though the number was later to decline, it rose to 17,322 in 1911.[20]

It was a function of technical schools in the industrial period to which they belonged to keep abreast of machine-age developments. This was important in the trades classes but, in household management, a balance had to be kept between training the girls to use equipment they would be likely to find at home, and introducing them to new, labour-saving devices. There was ambivalence here, and sometimes a lingering sense of virtue in doing things the hard way. Nevertheless, there were persistent requests from the Ladies' Advisory Committee to the Board for more sewing machines, and recommendations that the City Council be asked to supply electrical cooking and ironing equipment, though the national homecraft syllabus of 1914 still took no account of electricity in the home. Because of changing fashion and equipment in the business of ironing, the syllabus for laundrywork was one of the first to change. The 'doing up of collars', which girls in 1912 found a difficult feature of laundrywork, was to be required for some time, but 'crimping, goffering and curling' were soon to disappear.[21]

Domestic classes were no sooner installed in the main school than their utilitarian value was realized. In 1911, the Ladies' Committee recommended that, in view of the improved facilities, lunch might be provided at threepence a head for those travelling long distances. Dressmaking classes were useful in providing costumes for plays and in hemming towels and curtains for the girls' hostel.

This hostel was the realization of Mrs Gard'ner's dream. Standing in 12 acres of land and specially built for the purpose, it was opened in 1913. Mrs Gard'ner had the personality and drive to engage public interest and the unanimous support of her ladies' committee. The nucleus of a fund had been established in 1909 when Sir Ernest Shackleton, fresh from his Farthest South Expedition, gave a public lecture with half of the proceeds to go to the girls' hostel.[22] There were some delays through lack of finance and disagreement over a site, but an application for a government grant in 1911 was successful and, from then on, the hostel went ahead.

Some of the supporters were no doubt encouraged by the forlorn hope that a steady supply of trained servants would emerge as the status of domestic work was elevated. In practice, the short and long-term courses, which Mrs Gard'ner offered in domestic skills and 'institutional management', were seen as preparation for home life or, at the more advanced level, for teaching. Training was offered

for a teachers' diploma in domestic science, candidates being required to do additional courses at Canterbury College in physical science, physiology and bacteriology.[23] Each year there were students who went on for further qualifications at the School of Home Science, and the course was considered suitable as a preliminary to a nursing training.

Mrs Gard'ner had established a high reputation which was maintained by her successors. For some years, a third of the total enrolment of girls took the full domestic science course at Christchurch Technical College, a higher proportion than elsewhere in the country.[24]

It was the commercial courses that attracted the greatest number and though, initially, boys outnumbered girls, it was girls who gradually gained the ascendency. In 1915, the roll was 421, four times as great as in the first year of the day school. There were 109 in the commercial class, twice as many girls as boys. In the country as a whole, there were 1,018 girls and 937 boys in the technical high

9 *Dressmaking class at Christchurch Technical School, c. 1910.*

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schools,[25] as they were now officially called, 688 of the girls taking a commercial course.

No great claims were made for the intrinsic educational value of commercial subjects but their usefulness for employment was emphasized. Up to 11 hours a week might be devoted to commercial subjects (book-keeping, typewriting, shorthand, office practice, commercial art and commerce) and from three to four hours were spent on English, with an emphasis on commercial letter-writing, précis and correctness. On top of the core of subjects which everybody took, girls had to do some cookery and dressmaking, music and physical culture. It is no wonder that complaints were heard about the inadequate time given to history and civics.

There was encouragement to sit for Pitman's examinations and, during the years when it was open to girls, for Public Service Entrance. In 1912, the newly appointed Public Service Commissioner, in his first report for the year, announced that a decision had been made 'to confine the next entrance examination to boys'. The probable vacancies for girls were few, and there were already boys on the waiting list.[26] The restriction continued, but was removed in 1916 when, during a manpower shortage, women were proving their capabilities. The examination was, in fact, the same as the Intermediate Examination for Senior Free Place and girls were allowed to sit it, though, for four years, their names were excluded from the list for Public Service Entrance. In the Public Service Act of 1912 a clause remained stating that 'girls shall receive offers of appointment to such vacancies as in the opinion of the Commissioner are suitable for girls'.[27]

During the war years, departments that had previously objected to employing women had begun to find their services useful in 'assisting auditors, ledger work and other minor accounting and clerical work' as well as in shorthand and typewriting.[28] These were definite gains, but they were reversed with the return of servicemen and the relegation of women to temporary positions. In the private sector, women continued to supply the demand for low-paid office assistance. Many girls were staying at technical school only until such employment turned up.

Few stayed long enough to benefit from the balanced education that was the school's aim. The opportunities were there. Howell thought it important that girls should have games and proper

physical education. The school was early in the field of Swedish gymnastics, with a teacher 'specially trained at home'. It was Howell's strong belief that technical course students had an equal right to the humanizing influence of the arts, and his broad view was held by several of his staff who encouraged drama, music and art appreciation.

Clubs and activities outside the classroom tended to be segregated, though there was some shared activity. The separate Ramblers' Clubs for boys and girls combined for some expeditions. The Discussion Circle was at first for senior boys only, to prepare them for conducting meetings and public speaking, but girls soon formed their own circle which sometimes met with the boys. Howell saw to it that both boys and girls had opportunities for leadership. In 1912 he established a School Parliament, with a girl as speaker. Her performance, he said, gave 'no justification for the objection sometimes raised against the intrusion of women into practical politics'.[29] It would be appealing to assume that Mabel Howard, a pupil at the Technical College from 1908 to 1910, gained from the school some of the confidence that enabled her to become New Zealand's first woman Cabinet Minister in 1947. However, her political interests were already established before she came to the school, and she and her sister are remembered for talking politics in the playground when no one else was interested.[30]

It has been said of the technical high schools influenced by men like Howell and W. S. La Trobe, the first Superintendent of Technical Education, that there was seldom any need to impose repressive systems of discipline. Controls there were, though authoritarianism was reduced. Within this atmosphere it appears that girls, in keeping with the attitude of the times, were somewhat cosseted. No doubt with justification, there were anxieties about the girls' safety in the school's down-town locality, and they required notes from parents if they were to go outside the gates during the day.

The Ladies' Committee, which advised the Board on matters related to the girls as well as on furnishing, drew together some influential women with an interest in education. Charity schools in England had such committees of ladies who had the right to visit the school and, at least until the Second World War, took special interest in seeing that the girls' curriculum offered nothing that might give them ideas beyond domestic service. The ladies of Christchurch

may have seen themselves as doing equally charitable work but their aim was less restrictive. In the days when they would not have been given a place on the Board of Governors, they were a useful watch committee for the girls' interests and were prepared to take a stand on matters related to girls' education. In 1923, they more than once urged the Board to bring pressure on the Minister of Education to appoint a woman inspector for home science subjects.[31] When Margaret Dyer, MA, was selected, they expressed their gratification at the appointment: she had graduated from Girton College, Cambridge, and, with experience lecturing in Domestic Science at London University and organizing war-time classes for cooks, 'she had full qualifications on the practical side of home science'.

There was some tension between the claims of a general education, which received higher social approval, and an efficient technical education, to meet vocational needs. A criticism of technical schools was that they separated their students from those with more ambitious academic goals and higher socio-economic status. The students felt that they were socially apart, though it does not appear in school records where achievement is emphasized. Compromises were made: at Napier Technical School all 50 girls at first followed a combined commercial and domestic course in which half the time was devoted to work that would fit them to be home-makers and half the work qualified them for an office career.[32] After the earthquake in 1931, Napier took advantage of legislation passed in 1924 allowing for the absorption of technical classes into the high schools.

At the same time, girls were separated from boys by the nature of the courses provided. They were tacitly excluded from apprenticeship provisions to which boys' industrial courses were geared.[33] A strong plea for the need to train young women and girls in some of the skilled industries went unheeded.[34] It is doubtful whether the great pioneers of technical education were themselves clear about the direction of vocational training for girls. Both Howell and La Trobe made statements about training girls for paid domestic employment when this was not the trend of courses in their schools.[35] They were attempting to relate girls' training to boys' where it was hoped that scientific and technical expertise would raise the status of the trade in which the boy would be employed. Their statements were confused with notions of

improving family life and were lost in the cloudy abstracts that surround such topics. It was clear that home life courses were not strictly vocational in the sense of leading to paid employment as it was intended that boys' courses should be.

Because they catered for short-term students, the more popular commercial courses to some extent mitigated against the functioning of the broad curriculum. They were, however, providing a lead into the workforce. In 1922, 25 percent of the girls leaving technical high schools were taking up commerical work, compared with 13 percent of the boys.[36]

The ideal of an enlightened education with practical content may not have been reached, but the curriculum provided was in its intentions a genuine response to the needs of the less academic and socially-advantaged pupils. It may in the long run be seen to have sustained women's work opportunities in low-paid conventional occupations, but this chance for secondary education did enable girls to move out into work with increasing confidence and so to encourage the acceptance of the single woman's rights to independence and fair conditions.

A Rural District High School

While the Education Department was developing schemes for rural education that might move away from the grammar school model and prepare boys and girls for life in their own districts,[37] other influences were at work. Some controversy centred on the curricula of district high schools which were intended to give country children the benefits of secondary education under the umbrella of existing primary schools. The pioneers of the district high schools in New Zealand were Scottish settlers in Otago who had brought with them the experience of village schools where boys and girls with ability could be prepared for university under the supervision of a dominie. It was a rigorous male world into which girls were accepted if they could compete.

Though Hogben saw the extension of district high schools as a way of introducing more practical courses suited to rural needs, local opinion was often antagonistic. Peter Goyen, Otago's Chief Inspector, could see some merit in the scheme and agreed that 'it

might be good for the industries of the district',[38] but he claimed that it would be unacceptable to the parents of most of the children for whom the schools catered. In the meantime, the district high schools continued to offer to a small number of country girls and boys the type of education that could provide a pass from country to town, from low to higher social and economic level. In 1904, 45 of the 50 district high schools in the country taught Latin, all taught algebra, most taught Euclid, one taught cookery and none taught agriculture.[39] Ambitions seldom stretched beyond the Civil Service for boys and teaching as a career for girls, but it was important to country parents that their children should have the chance. In 1906, 23 percent of district high school[40] students in the country were preparing for Matriculation, and 52 percent for Junior Civil Service.

The life in a district high school was closely linked with the nature of the district but its curriculum was nationally controlled. The opportunities for girls at Geraldine in South Canterbury were in many ways similar to those provided elsewhere.

Geraldine, in 1900, was a town of 868 residents who prided themselves on maintaining a 'neat and pretty' town with a quality which visitors described as English. Most of the settlers were of English origin and there were no Maori families, the few who had lived in the town having moved to the Maori settlement at Arowhenua near the coast. In the district, something of the English social hierarchy was maintained. The squatters took an active interest in seeing that education was provided for those working on their properties but it was not for their own families' needs that the district high school was started. The pupils of the public school were the sons and daughters of the owners of small holdings, of farmhands, of timber mill workers and of those who ran the shops and other services in the town.

A primary school had been established in 1867 and, by the turn of the century, there were demands for secondary education.[41] Boarding schools in Christchurch, Timaru and Oamaru were popular but costly. It seemed reasonable that the South Canterbury Education Board should, in 1901, request a district high school at Geraldine on the grounds that it was 'in a central place surrounded by so many country schools away from a railway line'.[42] The need to ensure 12 or 15 pupils and a separate classroom with a suitably qualified teacher delayed approval. Still with a tenuous situation

concerning roll and accommodation, Geraldine officially became a district high school in 1902. Of the 24 pupils in the secondary department, 12 were girls. Five girls and 3 boys took Latin, 7 girls and 2 boys took French, all took Euclid and algebra as well as arithmetic which, along with English, was compulsory, 7 girls took book-keeping and shorthand and one took physiology.[43] The goals were the Junior Civil Service Examination and, for a few, Matriculation. Those who were not likely to succeed dropped out.

There appear to have been girls who were well able to compete

10 Geraldine District High School report for 1902.

GERALDINE DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL.

Subject.	Course	No. of Pupils	Average Marks per cent.	Amount of Work done.
English	Junior	6	58	Nesfield's Grammar and Composition; "Lady of the Lake"; "Black Arrow."
	Senior	1	—	Nesfield's Grammar and Composition and "Historical English"; Great Odes; Chaucer's "Prologue."
Latin	Advanced	2	68	Via Latina; Allen's Latin Grammar, pages 118 to 141; sight translation.
	Second	1	80	Via Latina, to page 115, with deponent and irregular verbs; easy sight translation.
French	Advanced	1	—	Wellington College Grammar; Tutorial French Reader, Tutorial French Prose Composition.
	Third	1	—	Tutorial French Prose Composition; Translation from Chardenal, Book II.
	Second	2	—	Chardenal's Book I., to Ex. 100.
	First	2	—	Chardenal's Book I., to Ex. 70.
Arithmetic		6	70	As prescribed for Standard VII.
Algebra	Third	1	10	Hall and Knight, to quadratics.
	Second	1	50	" " to page 185.

ENGLISH.—Six pupils were examined in English. One paper was excellent, two were satisfactory, two were fair, and one was weak. The oral answering in the examination of the portions of literature read during the year was satisfactory.

LATIN.—Good work was done by the three pupils who took courses in Latin.

FRENCH.—Five pupils were examined in French, the test being mainly an oral one. The senior pupils made a good appearance, but the juniors did only fairly well.

ARITHMETIC.—Six pupils presented papers in this subject and the results were good on the whole.

ALGEBRA.—Only two pupils were examined, the paper of one being fair and of the other weak.

Geography, book-keeping, and botany were also taught.

The work of the most advanced girl who was on the point of sitting for the University Junior Scholarship Examination in English, French, Latin, mathematics and botany, was not tested. She has since been passed for matriculation on the Scholarship papers.

NOTE.—At the time of our visit the number of pupils was reduced owing to an epidemic of measles.

with boys, though the general level of attainment was not high. Attendance, on which staffing allocation depended, was more irregular than in city schools. Country pupils could be 'storm-stayed' for a week at a time, boys were kept at home for seasonal work on the land, and girls to help with younger members of the family. Epidemics were common. In the inspector's report for 1906, there is evidence of a depleted roll, of the continuing academic nature of the curriculum and of the scholastic opportunity provided for a girl if she had the ability.

Attendances at the high school failed to satisfy the Department. The added accommodation problems caused by a fire in 1908 precipitated the closing of secondary classes.

Meanwhile, most of those girls who passed through Standard VI simply stayed at home. A few stayed at School in Standard VII, or went to small schools in the district as pupil teachers and tried for Training College Entrance. There was employment for some as domestic servants. For boys, there was work on the land or in the mill while it lasted, and in the town where the service occupations were largely male. The stock and station firms which provided clerical work were for many years among the most resistant to employing female staff.[45] Only in very small numbers did girls venture to the bigger towns to look for work.

It was characteristic of country communities that the welfare of the local public school was a focus of social and political interest. The New Zealand system of giving responsibility to school committees elected by householders was a distinctive feature of the education system as Goyen pointed out after a visit to Australia. 'In New Zealand,' he said, 'everybody is interested in education because everybody shares in its management.'[46] In Geraldine, householders' meetings were well attended but there was no response to the call from feminine activists for women to take on this responsibility and, by standing for the school committee, to 'create and popularize the sentiment of public duty among women'.[47] It was left to the men to plead for the re-opening of secondary classes, but it was for the benefit of girls as well as boys when, in 1914, the status of district high school was restored. Buildings were inadequate but students were fortunate in the benign dominie who took over the secondary classes, F. C. Lopdell, later to be Principal of Wellington Teachers' College.

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Boys and girls alike suffered from total lack of laboratory experience and were at a disadvantage in science subjects. By 1919, only the boys were receiving instruction in physical education, though the inspectors recommended that a course should be started for the girls.[48] There were difficulties over practical subjects, particularly dressmaking for girls: it was largely neglected and the curriculum remained traditional and bookish.

The debate over rural education persisted. The provision of domestic training for girls was secondary to the promotion of agriculture for boys. Country parents remained unenthusiastic. Farmers and their wives were sceptical of the school's ability to improve on the kind of training they could offer on the home ground and sometimes resented this intrusion into their province.

Pupils at the district high school travelled long distances on foot or on horseback. In 1922, the use of 'a large motor-bus' to transport pupils from neighbouring districts marked the beginning of an experiment in centralization for the primary school and, at the same time, brought an increase in the roll of the secondary department. This had some effect on the wider curriculum. Opportunities for team sport, music and drama were only slowly extended. Small numbers, constraints imposed by distances and pressure on a very small staff concentrated activity in the classroom. There was little opportunity to take advantage of the immense natural resources of the school's setting in the days before outdoor education could be looked on as part of the curriculum. Only a little use was made by botany classes of the stand of native bush handy to the town. Practical experiments in horticulture and agriculture on neighbouring farms were tried with uneven success. They were time-consuming, and there was more interest in the cultivation of plots in the school grounds.

At Geraldine and elsewhere, the local district high school went some way towards satisfying the wish of country parents that their children should not be denied the chances of city-dwellers. If they lived too far away to attend such a school, the government-run Correspondence School could, from 1921, take them as far as Standard VI, but did not provide secondary classes till 1929.

Country parents required that the opportunities should be there, but were not under pressure to take advantage of them. Many country girls were still leaving from primary school to spend the

years before marriage at home. Of those leaving from Standard VI after the 1919 Proficiency Examination, or during 1920, 41 percent, presumably girls, were recorded as 'assisting at home' and 31 percent, certainly boys, were 'farming'.[49] For girls, a distinction is made between helping at home and domestic service which, in 1920, attracted only one percent of Standard VI leavers. For those leaving the secondary classes, a similar pattern persisted. At Geraldine, well into the 1930s, half of the girls leaving each year would be listed as staying at home. The assumption was made, and is still heard in the district, that the best career for a country girl is to become a farmer's wife.

For a few, the district high schools opened the door to higher learning. The subjects, taken by boys and girls together, were in keeping with this aim. In 1925, manual subjects were taken by fewer than half the students at district high schools, and the time and attention given to them were haphazard. On the other hand, as well as the compulsory English, arithmetic, geography, history and civics, almost as many girls as boys (close on 80 per cent) were taking French and mathematics, and 58.7 of the girls were taking physics and chemistry.[50] The number taking Latin had dropped but, with obvious limitations, there were still opportunities for the talented and the hopeful. By the third year, numbers were very small and incentive to carry on could be dependent on establishing successful, often intimate relationships with teachers. Such was the experience of those taught by Dorothy Farnie at Geraldine. Her influence was such that girls thought of teaching as an attractive career and boys were unashamedly infected with her delight in literature.

Elsie Locke, in her autobiography, comments on the personal help she received at her district high school in the north where she enjoyed a closeness to her teachers which 'hardly seemed decent'. Her main difficulties were in science and it was when she came to sit the scholarship exam that the superior coaching of the city schools showed up. However, she did not feel that the two years 'aiming at the unattainable' had been wasted. She had, with her country education, learnt the valuable study skills of working on her own and reading beyond the boundaries of the syllabus.[51]

The city schools with superior coaching were, in the main, the high schools that had been established at least by the early years of the century. Alternative courses had done little to diminish the

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value placed on traditional education, not just as an entry to the professions but also as the most likely path to enlightenment. This was the choice of parents who wanted their daughters to be educated.

Shorthand and typewriting were popular choices for girls in the cities and larger towns, but there was some resistance to commercial courses that were narrowly vocational. Home life courses, where numbers and facilities permitted, were provided, generally for the less academically able.

Here were the three main alternatives for girls. It was only in the subjects of an established academic or general curriculum that they were working, with some limitations, in the same field as boys. Even where schools were open to both sexes, it was only in some small schools in country areas that real co-education was experienced. Differentiation was firmly established.

*Destination of Pupils on Completion of their Secondary Education**[52]

Profession	Boys N	Boys %	Girls N	Girls %
University college	118	*3*	86	*3*
Teaching or training college	136	*4*	277	*9*
Clerical–				
Government	299	*8*	26	*1*
Banks, insurance	187	*5*	9	**
Legal	60	*2*	29	*1*
Commercial	427	*12*	485	*15*
Engineering, surveying, architecture	257	*7*	1	**
Various trades and industries	494	*13*	46	*1*
Shops, warehouses	282	*8*	169	*5*
Farming	631	*17*	10	**
Home	165	*4*	1,548	*47*
Other occupations	95	*3*	190	*6*
Not known	529	*14*	384	*12*
Totals	3,680	*100*	3,260	*100*

*A summary of the returns furnished by school principals throughout New Zealand respecting the destination of pupils who left high schools, district high schools, and technical high schools during or at the end of the year 1925. The figures are in all cases exclusive of pupils who left one school to enter another full-time post-primary school.[52]

**No significant percentage.

The curriculum was evaluated in the light of the destination of pupils leaving secondary school. Lack of opportunity and social custom determined that the destination of nearly half the girls was 'home', though this category included some who were certainly awaiting employment or training, particularly nursing. As the table above indicates, the only occupations in which girls were to any marked degree using their secondary education for entry to the workforce were teaching and office work.

11 Girls learning laundry work at Christchurch Technical School, c. 1913.

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To the Infinite Betterment of the Race

Though there is no clear line of development in attitudes towards women and their education, it is possible to recognize accumulating influences, both social and idealogical, which during the first quarter of this century confirmed the stay-at-home role of women. Whether the school curriculum reflected the conservative attitudes of society or was seen as a medium for social change, as far as girls were concerned, the message at this stage was likely to be the same. Work opportunities might increase, but marriage was the ultimate goal and, with rare exceptions, the working wife or mother was seen to be failing in her duty. At one end of the social scale, she could be neglecting her children or driving her husband to drink: at the other, she was a threat not only to her husband's status but also to the exalted expectations of womanhood. Herbert Spencer in his *Principles of Sociology* (1876) had promoted the view that, in the highest forms of human society, women did not work outside the home. The idea was taken up by those who queried the direction of girls' education and it justified the Victorian and Edwardian husband's pride in being able to keep his wife from soiling her hands. The more idle and decorative she could remain, the higher his prestige. In spite of signs of restlessness and the more vigorous expectations and achievements of a few women, the combined weight of opinion tended to strengthen the Victorian belief that, though society might change, woman still had her special sphere.

Movements towards social reform might have been expected to embrace a liberal attitude towards women. Instead, with common acceptance of ideals of racial improvement, the position of women in the progressive scheme began to attract anxious vigilance. Questions were asked about the secondary education of girls. Was

it enabling them to play their vital part in rearing successively fitter and nobler generations?

The direct influence of such attitudes on the curriculum is clear in the matter of domestic science teaching. The purpose of this chapter is to look at influences which had a bearing on a girl's education in other ways. What perception of her own role was she likely to bring with her to school? To what extent would this be reinforced by the expressed and assumed tenets which might be embodied in the covert curriculum? In considering these questions, certain developments emerge as significant: the part women played in social reform, anxieties concerning women's role in the race for national efficiency, alarm over the effects on girls of pressurized schooling together with a re-examination of the direction of their curriculum, and finally the effects of war.

Women in Social Reform

Claims that New Zealand was a working man's paradise reflected the hope of society rather than the reality. Certainly the gap between the rich and the poor was narrower than in England, and a labourer in a New Zealand town received higher wages and enjoyed better living conditions than his counterpart in the old world. A working woman of equivalent class was likely to be a domestic servant or a factory worker. Revelations of sweated labour among women in the clothing trade in New Zealand in the 1890s had come as a shock. It was 50 years since Thomas Hood had written for *Punch* his 'Song of the Shirt', as a protest against the miserable working conditions of London seamstresses. Such exploitation of workers was a horror which settlers hoped they had left behind when they set sail for their promised land.

New Zealand shared with other countries the twentieth century problem of the urban drift. At the turn of the century, under 50 percent were living in towns compared with nearly 60 percent by 1926.[1] It is difficult sometimes to differentiate between country and town dwellers in New Zealand, some smaller towns having maintained a rural way of life. However, problems associated with urbanization aroused concern and provoked a demand for social legislation and improved conditions.

Belief in the inevitability of human progress was strong and there were high hopes that it would be accomplished by human endeavour, through social and political reform. There was satisfaction in New Zealand that compulsory primary education and a uniform syllabus established the basis of an egalitarian society. No one, it appeared, was denied the right to advancement. Benefits to society would come through having a largely literate population, through keeping potential larrikins and troublesome girls off the streets and through the teaching of middle class values of morality and social behaviour.

Secondary education was still a privilege for the minority. Increased access to secondary education was a part of the social legislation of the Liberal Party, in power from 1890 to 1912. The provision of technical education and the increase in the number of district high schools gave chances to the sons and daughters of the less affluent.

Women had little say in this legislation, and the inequalities that still limited their participation led the more vocal to complain about persisting disabilities. Kate Sheppard (1848-1934), suffragist leader and first president of the National Council of Women, had every reason to be dissatisfied. 'When we examine the political and legal conditions of this colony,' she declared, 'we find a curious mingling of advanced civilization and semibarbarism.'[2] It was inconceivable that women who had the vote should not be allowed to enter parliament: legislation after all did not require any special muscular development. Though she might not have much opportunity to sharpen her wits against men's, a woman was certainly not lacking in the capacity or the experience required to deal with affairs of state, Kate Sheppard argued.

> An average intelligent wife and mother has to acquire an elementary knowledge of physiology, of hygiene, of dressmaking or tailoring; she learns the duties of a children's nurse, of a housemaid, of a plain cook, and financial problems of a complexity that would puzzle a colonial treasurer have to be grappled with and solved.

She went on to plead for women to take their place on juries, insisting that there were no signs of women's inferior intelligence to debar them. Though girls were called on for more home duties and had less spare time than boys, they achieved as well in primary school: later, some showed at least equal capacity in passing degrees.

> In teaching, almost the only practical difference that is made between the sexes is that, while a woman may do the same work as a man, she will be paid only half the salary he receives.

The whole country, she claimed, was affected by the mono-sexual system of representation. 'Will not future generations,' she asked, 'wonder what kind of barbarians we were?'[3]

The degree of civilization at which a country had arrived could be judged by the position of its women. This, according to politically active women of the time, was one of the significant lessons of history.[4] They saw one of the purposes of education as preparation for public life. They differed from later feminists in accepting a particular role for women, a sphere of influence within which they could best exercise their talents and work for the betterment of mankind. What they could offer appeared to be determined by their sex.

Their only hope for political action was through their women's organizations. There were high expectations, for instance, that the National Council of Women in the first vigorous phase of its existence (1896-1910) would be influential in affairs of state.

The early twentieth-century campaign among women to improve conditions of living has been identified as social feminism. Women were unique in their ability to bear children and were endowed with a mother instinct. According to an American social historian:

> This instinct gave perceptual powers. It heightened sensitivity to basic human needs. Men, not sharing in this sensitivity, tended to be blind to interests beyond their own. And since they had controlled political and economic power, human needs had been neglected. Now able to recognize this, women of this generation had had to join cause.[5]

In New Zealand, likewise, women themselves began to use the womanhood image to justify their participation in social reform, even if it meant rationalizing their arguments to do so.

The advances made in the first dozen years after gaining the vote may have been disappointing, but women felt they were making progress in matters of social reform where their special qualities allowed them some influence:

> Without wishing to exaggerate, it may be safely said that the advent of women in the politics of the Colony has been a great moral gain. The welfare of the home, the protection of the weak, the causes of crime, of poverty, the best methods of education, are being sought for with a zeal and earnestness that is most inspiring.[6]

In the amelioration of society which politicians promised and Social Darwinists of the time envisaged, women had a particular role to play. They had the advantages of womanly sensitivity and moral superiority, but they had also to be educated.

National Efficiency

Men and women who believed in greater independence and political involvement for women had their opponents, and much of the disapproval was directed towards education. To the more conservative, the effect on girls of anything beyond primary education appeared to lead to a betrayal of their sex. Ambitions towards public life, paid employment, independence, were luring them away from their proper function and so endangering the progress of the race.

In times of war, anxieties concerning national fitness and a healthy birthrate are always likely to be exacerbated. The Boer War coincided with a period of intense interest in the development of national efficiency and the investigation of prevailing degeneration. This was particularly strong in Britain where a high proportion of physical unfitness was revealed among those applying for military service. Women were counted as partly responsible because they were too often seeking paid employment and neglecting the responsibilities of child bearing.[7] In New Zealand the same concerns were emerging and the secondary education of girls was called into question on three counts: the physical strain it demanded was damaging; it gave girls ideas of independence and weakened their sense of responsibility; its content was far removed from the needs of mothers and home-makers.

The whole question of physical fitness was actively discussed, its proponents being informed in varying degrees by scientific knowledge and popular myth. The physique of mothers was a matter of considerable importance to eugenicists who placed their faith in 'better mating' and described their movement as 'the science of being well-born'.[8] The responsibility for improving the quality of the race was a social rather than an individual one. It was not simply a matter of genetics. The president of the WCTU, commending the study of eugenics to members, saw it as 'the study

of agencies under social control which may improve or impair the racial qualities of future generations, either physically or mentally'.[9] Such views were strongly advocated by the Eugenics Education Society, which claimed among its vice-presidents at one stage the Primate of New Zealand, the Prime Minister (Rt Hon. W. F. Massey) and a former Minister of Education (Hon. G. Fowlds).[10] Some women appear to have been cautious about the claims of the eugenicists. In 1911, the *New Zealand Home Journal* published a report of a lecture given by Dr Findlay on 'Urbanization and National Decay'. He pointed out that the population of New Zealand was drifting to the towns, the birthrate was dwindling fastest in the cities and the reduced rate was maintained chiefly by the least fit. The prospect justified his claim that the future meant 'Eugenics or Extinction'. However, the *Home Journal* took the view that the greatest cause of degeneracy was drink and, for their readers, more important than eugenics was to vote prohibition.[11]

In the patriotic race for national efficiency, fear of failure led to a frantic search for causes. The education of girls was a target.

Cramming at School

The connection between the unfitness of mothers and the damaging effects of secondary education had been drawn with some persistence from the beginning of the century. In 1901, the printed report appeared of an Australasian medical congress in Queensland. Dr Lindo Ferguson, a Dunedin eye specialist, gave evidence of the link between physical or nervous strain and eyesight problems, taking some examples from his experience with girls at Otago Girls' High School.[12] He used figures to show that nervous strain was greater among girls than among boys and that the highest incidence was in girls during the critical years, 11½ to 15½. He linked strain with anaemia.

> I have often doubted as to whether our educational system was not to blame for the prevalence of anaemia, which is so universal among colonial girls.

Aiming at scholarships, excessive amounts of homework (according to one teacher, parents expected five hours a night) and an over-

COURSE OF STUDY, 1906.

Sixth Form (Upper).

English.—Chaucer—"The Knightes Tale," "Truth," "Pity," "Parlement of Birds." Shakspeare—"Macbeth." Spenser—"Fairie Queene," Book I., Cantos VII.-X. Milton—"L'Allegro," "Il Penseroso," "Comus." Literature—From Elizabethan to Victorian Period. Historical English Grammar. Composition, &c.

Latin.—Virgil, "Aeneid," Book I., 110 lines. Livy—Book XXI., 24 chapters. Horace—Odes, Book I.—Book II., 7 Odes, and Selected Satires. Cicero—"In Catilinam," I. and II. Cæsar—"Gallic War," Book I., 8 chapters. Tacitus—"Agricola," 36 chapters. Reid's Translation at Sight—Selections. Composition, Grammar, &c. Roman History.

French.—Chardenal's Advanced Exercises. Erckmann-Chatrian "Waterloo." Boielle—Poetry. Grammar, Composition, &c. Ninet's Readings for Middle and Upper Forms.

German.—Schiller—"Maria Stuart" (part). Otto's German Grammar. De La Motte Fouque—"Undine." Goethe—"Faust." Buchheim's German Prose Composition.

Mathematics.—Arithmetic—The whole subject. Algebra—To Permutations and Combinations, inclusive. Geometry—Euclid, Books I., II., III., IV., VI. Trigonometry—Lock's Trigonometry.

Science.—Botany—The Morphology and Physiology of the Botanical Types specified in the Junior Scholarship Schedule. Chemistry—The Metallic Elements—Revision of the Non-metallic Elements.

12 A demanding course for sixth form girls.

burdened syllabus were responsible for strain. He gave the course of study of a sixth form in a girls' high school as an example of the unduly high demands on a girl at this level. The matter, he claimed, was one that determined the future of the race chiefly as it affected girls.

> Colonial parents have a very laudable desire to educate their girls that they may be able to support themselves. . . . To ask that for three years, from twelve to fifteen, their education should proceed on very much modified lines is to invoke an outcry such as would be raised if one urged three years' military service for every boy from eighteen to twenty-one, but the slow process of evolution which has during countless ages made girls as they are has done so not to make them teachers of backblocks schools, but the mothers of generations to come. Injudicious education may render them unfit to fill the part nature has destined them for . . .[14]

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He gave his own view of what the curriculum for girls should provide during the period of developmental changes. For three years, from 12 to 15, he would confine their work to English subjects, with much time spent on sewing, cookery, dressmaking, knitting and other such feminine accomplishments as do not come into a university curriculum but are, nevertheless, of much value if the girl, instead of becoming a teacher, becomes a wife. He advocated more games, gymnastics and outdoor exercise for girls whose physical education, unfortunately, received less attention than boys.

> With such a programme, some girls might be lost to teaching but this loss would be counterbalanced by the benefit to the race. . . . In the great battle of survival of the fittest, whether our race is to figure as a strong, healthy nation, or as a weedy, neurotic, decadent one, depends very largely on the stamina of the mothers of the future, and it may be that the battle will be won on the playgrounds of our girls' schools.[15]

He had strayed a long way from his subject of myopia, but he justified himself by linking his topic with the problem of degeneration in general and making a final plea for a protest against the educational system if it was found to be pressing unduly on the nervous system of the mothers of the next generation and menacing the nervous balance of their heirs.

Such medical support was fodder for the angry public outcry against 'cram'. It was true that the secondary school system was dominated by examinations, and even those entirely in favour of extending opportunities of secondary education to girls were not impressed by the type of force-feeding which such a system encouraged.

A strong protagonist in the fight against 'cram' was Dr Truby King, Superintendent of Seacliff Hospital. He had already established himself as an able leader in the field of infant and maternal health before he launched his attack on the education of girls. There was plenty of overseas literature on the subject and King aligned himself fully with the views of the American psychologist and pedagogue, G. Stanley Hall (1846-1924). This prolific and influential writer accepted the evidence that women were capable of competing with men, but advocated that it was necessary for the health of humanity to retard the education of girls and to keep them in the adolescent state nature intended for them.[16]

King's opportunity came with a lecture to the Froebel Society in 1906. It led to much discussion and newspaper correspondence from which he selected material for the publication of a pamphlet. Cram, he declared, was an evil 'recognized as a leading factor in the production of degeneracy, making many women unfit for maternity and both sexes more or less incompetent'.[17] He was able, from his professional experience, to draw on case studies of mental patients and, for causes of breakdown, he looked to external influences such as pressure from studies rather than to individual or psychological factors. Freud's impact on psychological medicine was only beginning. However, King made reference to other authorities such as his friend, Lindo Ferguson, the oculist, and his speeches and writings are larded with phrases such as 'it is recognized' and 'experts agree', calculated to impress the layman and intimidate the sceptical. The statements of a primary school headmaster were used to prove his point that girls should not compete with boys beyond the second standard. He came back to the view that eye strain and nervous breakdown were linked by quoting from yet another oculist, this time a Queenslander:

> . . . it is a form of neurasthenia, an affection of the brain and nervous system, and may directly lead up to migraine, chorea, hysteria, epilepsy, or other neuroses, or may end in sleeplessness and insanity.[18]

Excessive study also appeared to account for the fact that a number of educated and clever girls were falling prey to pulmonary consumption. Brain work was considered more harmful than manual work and sapped girls of the strength they should be storing for motherhood. Here lay his main argument, and he was fully aware of its appeal to the public.

> If the secondary effects of over-pressure among girls in impairing the potentialities of reproduction and healthy maternity were more widely known, it would probably prove a greater incentive to moderation than the more striking but comparatively rare causation of insanity.[19]

King had a following among teachers for whose well-being he expressed some concern. One primary school headmaster pointed out that there was no need for strain if the syllabus, 'an eminently adjustable' one, were followed intelligently. In King's attack on the examination system, teachers were behind him, and he leant heavily on the sane views of Maria Marchant, the Lady Principal of Otago

Girls' High School, who, ahead of her time, advocated a system of internal assessment in her address to the annual gathering of parents in 1906:

> The secondary schools used to be hampered by their leaving examinations only. Now they have the additional incubus of a compulsory examination for all pupils at the end of the second year, this examination deciding whether they may continue at High School or not. The Syllabus for this is constantly changing, but as at present arranged it is a very heavy one indeed, and pressing as it does on the boys and girls at a critical period of their development it has become a serious menace to the health and well-being of the rising generation. The only remedy is to 'trust the teachers' to accredit their pupils from the primary to the secondary, and thence to the university, on the German and American plan.[20]

It took the sensitive and discerning Alexander Wilson, now Rector of the Boys' High School after 12 years (1885-96) as principal of the girls' school, to identify flaws in King's arguments. In a letter to the *Evening Star*, he took King to task for the dramatic method of his presentation and distortion of the facts for the sake of rhetoric. He felt that, as a man of science, King should know better than to use isolated examples as proof.[21]

Wilson's opposition was swept aside and appeared only to inflame King to further heated argument. He addressed large audiences and attracted the attention of the press. Prompted first by a concern for physical well-being, Dr King ranged over the whole gamut of educational needs and set himself up as an authority on liberal educational thought, quoting selectively from Pestalozzi and Froebel.

King was at times reflecting valid anxieties over the education system. There was indeed a risk that schools could be focusing attention on 'narrow, scholastic reasoning and attainment, with a view to passing examinations', and that independent thought and initiative could be stifled.[22] Such views gave credence to his more extreme arguments which, at the time, were very acceptable to those who, for a variety of reasons, were afraid that women might be moving out of their traditional role. The possibility was threatening to the establishment where success often depended (as in King's own case) on the support of a home-loving spouse, and in the less well-educated majority when the opening up of new opportunities for their daughters raised imponderable questions about the future

of family life. It could have been reassuring for some to hear from the learned Dr King that study might make their daughters unfit for maternity. What better reason than that for doubting the value of education in general?

Among those who valued their own opportunities for higher education, he did not strike such a sympathetic response. In 1909, he and F. C. Batchelor, a Dunedin obstetrician, addressed an august audience, gathered for the annual meeting of the Society for the Promotion of the Health of Women and Children (the forerunner of the Plunket Society). The subject was 'The Effect of Advanced Education of Women on the Vitality of the Race'. Dr Batchelor called on the State to recognize the need for a radical divergence in the education of boys and girls at the age of puberty. Studies for girls should be chiefly directed to domestic management and economy, to physiology and hygiene which would be far more useful than a smattering of French, algebra or Euclid. The passing of useless examinations was merely to gratify parental pride. Domestic science could provide a wholesome preparation for marriage, but the education system was leading girls into a course for which Nature had not intended them. He confidently asserted:

> That my views are shared by the majority of mankind is shown by the fact that the competent domestic usually promptly acquires an establishment of her own, while the scholarship girl with a 'D' certificate will probably face years of weary teaching in a backblock school.

The inference that women who married early had the better life was apparently quite acceptable to the audience who rewarded his statement with applause.[23] Dr King fully supported his colleague and came in very strongly against the education of women for the professions, a practice which he regarded as absolutely indefensible.

In Dunedin, Dr Emily Siedeberg, the first woman to qualify from Otago Medical School in 1896, took up the cudgels on behalf of professional women, particularly women medical students whose ability to stay the course without breaking down had been questioned. For herself, entering the medical profession had resulted in 'increased good health and increased happiness'.[24]. She cited cases of women who had successfully completed medical training and later married and produced healthy families. She had found as a doctor that girls who were kept at home with no mental interests

were more susceptible to neurasthenia 'especially of the morbid and melancholy type', whereas their sisters who had gone out and occupied their minds were the healthier ones. 'I claim,' she said, 'that women who have been disciplined and trained to think for themselves are the women who make the most capable housekeepers. . . .'

In Wellington, where the Batchelor/King speeches were fully reported, the ire of Dr Agnes Bennett was similarly stirred. To a woman who had campaigned to increase opportunities of higher learning for women and had herself suffered discrimination, including the cancellation of a medical appointment, because of her sex, the statements of the two male doctors were a battle cry.[25] In 1908, she had become superintendent of St Helen's Hospital in Wellington, the same position held by Emily Siedeberg in Dunedin. The St Helen's Hospitals in the four main centres, the first state-registered maternity hospitals in the world, played an important part in the reduction of infant mortality, though greater credit was always given to King and the Plunket Society. Agnes Bennett recognized King's achievements, though she did not accept his methods. Now that he was pontificating on the curriculum for girls, and both he and Batchelor had managed to impress heads of church and state with their outmoded views on what Nature intended for women, she attacked their presumption. For *The Dominion* she wrote:

> Who will arrogate to themselves the right to say what Nature did intend for women or men? . . . Is woman to stifle the inborn yearnings of her intellect that she may be no more than a healthy animal to minister to and apparently compensate for the impaired vitality of man? Can true progress possibly consist of a man of highly cultured intellect pacing side by side with a woman who is no more than an intelligent vegetable? It is impossible for a woman who does not understand some of the complexities of life to train her boys and girls in the self-reliance and judgement that are necessary to meet these complexities . . . The true crux of the matter is the trained mind . . . Some channels there must be for woman's faculties. It is perfectly hopeless not to expect her to change with the times.[26]

Some women declared their support privately, others in print, drawing attention to the sacrifices women had made and to the need for increased opportunities. A Christchurch grandmother pointed out that so much equality of opportunity had already been gained, the time had passed when the idea of shutting women out from

everything but domesticity could be tolerated.[27] A Dunedin man added support saying, 'They have to obey the law with ourselves and clearly have the right of saying how they may be educated. They are original thinkers too.'[28] The controversy simmered and erupted again when, in 1914, King put through a motion at the Eugenics section of the Australasian Medical Congress stating that education which gave 'the best all-round equipment in body, mind, morals and inclination for homelife and potential motherhood was the best for all girls whether they married or not'.[29] Dr Bennett succeeded in having the motion withdrawn on the grounds that laymen had voted for it and it was therefore not valid. But the matter did not rest there.

Re-examining the Curriculum

At no time until the 1970s did the question of girls' education attract so much public comment. The campaign was clearly being steered more towards educating girls for their domestic role. Both Emily Siedeberg and Agnes Bennett argued for the training of girls in domestic arts: a woman's proper centre was still the home though the experience of education and employment should be open to her. Even in her enlarged sphere, a woman's main contribution would be through her womanly qualities, particularly through her moral superiority.

Such views played into the hands of those seeking differentiation in the curriculum. Some headmistresses were wary. Mary McLean, Principal of Wellington Girls' College, spoke with assurance to the Cohen Commission on the importance to the country of educating women to the same level as men. The delay in recognizing this, she suggested, now lurked 'only in the minds of a few half-crazy folk'. She was adamant that girls should be allowed to compete in the same subjects as boys, and was defensive on the matter of physical strain.

Whatever the curriculum provided for girls at secondary school, it was not intended to diminish their womanliness. For this reason, it was widely believed that girls, particularly at secondary school, should have women teachers. Reasons for favouring this practice

were as varied as the notions of femininity. Mary McLean took a robust if somewhat evasive approach:

> Put the education of girls, all through, more fully in the hands of women and you need not be afraid that a girl's ordinary mission will be lost sight of or her health to suffer in the process of a sound secondary education.[30]

Blanche Butler of Auckland Girls' College was adamant that girls should be taught separately from boys and by women, preferably from the primary school up:

> A woman understands women and girls far better than a man does. The man may be a teacher of exceptional ability and a disciplinarian of the first order, but he is always at a disadvantage in dealing with the girls – because, in the first place, he lacks the complete understanding of the woman and, in the second case, chivalry gives the girl an advantage-ground of which she is not slow to avail herself. For her moral atmosphere, too, it is wiser that she be placed in the hands of women, and trained in the highest sense to be a womanly woman.[31]

The teaching profession came to be seen more and more as a womanly occupation and even as a substitute for marriage. In teaching, women could use the same qualities as were required for bringing up a family and, as they were guardians of the morals of the race, their influence on young children at school was necessary.

Women principals took opportunities to remind their staff of their particular vocation and the importance of their task. The zeal of the early pioneers of women's education had weakened, but there were still clarion calls from the leaders of the profession. The need to fight for the rights of women in education had disappeared below the surface and, in New Zealand, as in England, the call was now for women teachers to use their natural gifts as well as their intelligence for the improvement of the quality of life. Sara Burstall, the influential headmistress of Manchester High School for Girls, offered such a challenge in 1912:

> We women, in whom beats the great heart of humanity, are able to reach and to touch the fundamental bases of the common human life that is shared by all sections, and therefore to reconcile warring claims, to link together social classes, as the women of the family link the generations.[32]

Both men and women took part in affirming the traditional female role which, in schools, teachers were expected to encourage. This was not simply on the level of advocating and endowing courses in homecraft. Even the strongest advocates of academic training for girls could argue that their education would in the fullest sense make them better wives and mothers. Though some saw the motherhood role as threatened by higher learning, others saw it enriched. John Macmillan Brown, who contributed a series of articles to the *Lyttelton Times* from 1908, claimed that no amount of higher learning was too much for the future mothers of the race. He saw the eugenic process as functioning partly through the development of the intellect and the training of mothers 'to be experts in the profession', making good use of the varied intellectual faculties that their task demanded. He claimed that, if woman had shared in the higher, more scientific and progressive education, 'she might have tried to be a comrade to her husband'.[33]

On the subject of women teachers, he brought his ideas together in a lecture printed in 1926. He pointed out that the proportion of women in teaching was rapidly growing, partly because they were cheaper. However, most people would agree, he thought, that they were better suited to teaching than men were:

> All civilized nations make them the teachers of kindergartens and schools for younger children; their maternal natures make them more sympathetic, and their quickness of wit makes them more alert in the handling of childhood.

He had married an intellectual woman who continued her profession and bore three children. He did not see advanced education as damaging to the maternal instinct, and he liked the idea of intellectual competition between boys and girls:

> To come above the ablest of boys in the prize-list gives grit and independence to the girl that will serve her well as the head of a household or a school. To be beaten by a girl is a sure way of encouraging in men respect for women.

His was a liberal view which appears to have been acceptable because it embraced and did not depart from the popular conception of womanliness. He saw the greatest hope for the improvement of humanity in training for motherhood, 'the greatest of all professions'.[34]

Popular magazines, novels, sermons affirmed the belief in devotion to the duties of motherhood. Illustrated texts which were hung in houses carried similar messages often in a highly sentimentalized way. Biographies and reminiscences reveal the general acceptance, not always without frustration, of a nurturing and domestic role for women. Some influence on the hidden curriculum for girls at school was inevitable.

World War I

When girls at school during the First World War were reminded of their patriotic duty, it was as a rule to ensure their sense of responsibility as home-makers. It is questionable whether the new opportunities that were opening up in employment brought a corresponding change in the vision of the kind of life for which they were being prepared. Patriotism gave rise to the concept of a national character. In the new order that was to emerge from the devastation, women had a creative part to play. There was sincere belief in such idealism, and adolescent girls were likely to be impressed by it. Blanche Butler, at Auckland Girls' Grammar School in 1915, exhorted her pupils: 'Here in this school is a small section of the training ground of the women who are to build a new world from the fragments of the old.'[35]

The campaign for political power for women seemed to diminish as the sense of domestic responsibility grew. Once again a falling birthrate and the attention to national fitness among recruits spurred on the campaign for training in motherhood. The hearth and the cradle represented a woman's sphere of influence. Nationhood was a part of the wider loyalty to the Empire. The Plunket Society, which now engaged the energies of a large number of active women volunteers, encouraged such a view. King's book, *Baby's First Month*, which had been issued to mothers by the Health Department, was followed in 1916 by Macmillan's London publication of *The Expectant Mother and Baby's First Months*. This was reprinted by the New Zealand Government and a copy was handed by the registrar to each applicant for a marriage licence.[36] In fact, the Truby King method became official policy and, where mothercraft courses were offered in schools, it was on this method that they were based. It

was a system which was very easily explained. Many mothers undoubtedly gained support from the straightforward directions, the orderly routine, the camaraderie of belonging to Plunket, and the high sense of motherly duty that King's writing and speeches inspired. Encouraged by the dramatic decline in infant morbidity and mortality, especially among the rich and well educated,[37] a national cult developed. Others have attributed the improved infant health to different causes. Even King's claim that 80 percent of New Zealand mothers had adopted his methods could be modified by the knowledge that many mothers linked themselves with Plunket, took what they wanted from it, but were never slaves to the stipulated regimen. Others, less daring, feared to part from it. The unquestioning acceptance of King's methods by so many could be attributed partly to his own energy in the pursuit of his goal. This was coupled with an authoritative approach based on dubious scientific analogy between babies and the plants in King's garden, the potato crop at Seacliff and the feeding habits of calves on the hospital farm.

The movement was in tune with the jingoism of the First World War and the urge towards building up the strength of the nation that lingered into the 1920s.

Above all, women were encouraged to accept their supportive role. The threat to male workers was therefore reduced and, if a woman took on a man's job, whether it was because of the war or to fill in a gap between school and marriage, it was generally a temporary affair, secondary to her vocation for motherhood.

Women did move into men's work. By 1916, the Bank of New Zealand reported that they now had 150 lady clerks in positions which were formerly considered to be the exclusive domain of men. They were intending to take more to release men for the forces.[38] Prejudice lingered and, for some time, women in New Zealand banks were kept behind the scenes and not allowed to appear as tellers at the counter. It was in clerical and commercial employment that women's opportunities expanded. The Public Service was forced to admit women, their entry having been limited under the Public Service Act of 1912. The Public Service Association, formed in 1914, included in their first policy statement the principles of equal pay and privileges for men and women.[39] However, the moment the war was over, it became a patriotic duty to hand jobs back to the

men. Official policy was clearly to down-grade the positions of women and, by 1921, any semblance of equality was abandoned. The decision was made to appoint no female cadets, and women could be employed as shorthand writers and typists on a temporary basis only.[40] The provision of a special category for women, the 'female office assistant', paid on a lower scale, gave work to many but did little for a woman's sense of self-worth.

The decisions of the Public Service were indicative of the common attitude towards women's work during and immediately after the war. A woman could take on a man's work if it was expedient, in the interests of national efficiency. A sense of duty and a great deal of public rhetoric were her only supports when the time came to step back into an inferior position.

So, into her sacrificial role, the waiting woman, the sad heroine, sister of a soldier killed at the front, the schoolgirl was initiated early. Primary school readers were fond of this theme.

The realities were brought home to the pupils of Auckland Girls' Grammar School when, 'a few days after the landing at Gallipoli, girls were called one by one from their classrooms, to be told of brothers killed in action and to be sent, white-faced to their homes'.[41] It was a woman's duty to encourage the men in her family to go off and face death. In recruiting campaigns, the expectation that women would want to be associated with a hero was recognized as a powerful influence.[42]

While they waited, the women were not idle. The knitting of scarves and socks, the making of shirts and 'hussives', the raising of funds for the Red Cross and the relief of sufferers, the baking of cakes to be sewn in canvas and despatched to the boys overseas – such activities gave women and schoolgirls alike a sense of patriotic purpose. They were all activities considered suitable for women.

A boy's patriotic fervour could find an outlet in the school cadet corps which, in most cases, was compulsory. The advocacy of domestic training for girls as an alternative to cadets for boys provided a compelling basis for differentiation in the curriculum. Both courses had their place in building up the strength of the nation.

The idea of a girl's cadet corps had been suggested but was regarded as somewhat freakish. The thought of training girls for

combat was contrary to all notions of womanliness. Many women, as a matter of conscience, saw themselves as peacemakers rather than as combatants.

Women could, however, join in the hate campaign that grew strong during the First World War. One teacher looking back remembers the first wave of patriotism when people destroyed books of Beethoven's music and forbade the playing of German composers.[43] A more acceptable way of demonstrating patriotism was in lending support to the forces. The activities of the Navy League were officially encouraged in New Zealand schools and girls joined in large numbers for the honour of wearing the badges and attending the annual address and flag ceremony. Some, no doubt with their eye on the social possibilities, maintained their membership long after leaving school.

Demonstrations of patriotism in New Zealand schools and youth movements were to flourish for many years to come. Very soon after the beginning of the Boy Scout movement in New Zealand in 1907, a branch was formed for girls, largely as a result of their own eagerness to be included. So that parents might not be alarmed at their daughters' embarking on such manly activities, they were officially called Peace Scouts from 1908 to 1923. The scouting handbook that was re-written for their use provided for many feminine arts and placed emphasis on being ladylike.[44]

Most New Zealand women, who had suffered heavy losses, though they appeared to be far removed from the realities of war, were in no hurry to lose their idealism.

A few were disillusioned, of course, and there were women who were outspoken anti-imperialists. It was a woman teacher, Hedwig Weitzel, who, in 1921, was arrested on an unsubstantiated charge of distributing communist literature and was indirectly responsible for a full enquiry into the assumed subversive activities of the teaching service. This led to the legal institution of the teacher's loyalty oath which still applies. It was another woman, Jean Park, who stirred public antipathy against the Minister of Education, James Parr, and successfully instigated legal action against him, publicly criticizing his blatant attempt to control the teaching service.[45]

However, active women during and immediately after the war were more likely to throw themselves into organizations which were politically conforming. Their main concern was for family life.

Plunket, the revived National Council of Women, the Society for the Protection of Women and Children, the Women's Thought League, the YWCA were moral and social reform movements with a clear view of woman in her proper place, at home as wife and mother. Through these organizations, a strong puritan ethic was propagated and the mystique of motherhood developed. The churches conveyed a similar message. The influence of the Roman Catholic church was largely on its own flock. Irish suspicion of anyone who might come between a mother and her baby appears to have deterred Catholic women from responding in large numbers to Plunket, but the cult of the Virgin Mary, particularly as it was presented to adolescent girls, contributed to the idealization of motherhood.

Attitudes that were prevalent in society would not specifically have been taught. Teachers could become absorbed in the task of presenting their subject and of school organization so that schools developed some insulation against influences from without. Girls at some schools might learn from contact with their teachers and peers, and with access to greater knowledge and skills, to challenge accepted ideas. In general, it seems that schools reflected and reinforced the expectations of society. The activities in which she was encouraged, the clothes she wore, the ideals that were emphasized combined to suggest to a girl that Nature had a special purpose for her, that she was intended to be different.

Women teachers sometimes gave a glimpse of the possibility of a satisfying single life. Alternatively, they were seen either as blue-stocking spinsters and therefore exempt as models, or as mothers *manqué* around whom heroic legends grew. Often, they were indeed women whose lovers had died in the war.

The social upheaval of the war could have heralded an era of new openings for women. It appears that any long-term change in women's role expectations was minimal.

These are only some of the social developments which, by the early 1920s, might have had some bearing on the education of girls. In the light of such influences, what, then, would a schoolgirl's perception of her own future have been?

She would have been considered odd if marriage and motherhood were not her ultimate goal. She might have been encouraged to prepare for a period of paid work but this could be

only for a limited time and, in normal circumstances, she would not be expected to return to her career at any stage after marriage. The bearing of babies, the nurturing of children and the support of a husband, however remote and mysterious the experience, would have appeared to her as a noble calling and patriotic duty if not a romantic destiny.

Such expectations combined with notions of equal educational opportunity to determine the school experience of girls in the first 25 years of this century. Patterns were established which were to become the legacy for succeeding generations to inherit and modify.

13 'Masque of Empire', performed at Nelson College for Girls Patriotic Concert in 1914.

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PART TWO

The old rubbish about masculine and feminine studies is beginning to be treated as it deserves. It cannot be seriously maintained that these studies, which tend to make a man nobler or better, have the opposite effect upon a woman; the 'blue-stocking' ghost will I am sure be altogether laid if brought to the light of day.

Dorothea Beale
Cheltenham, 1869

My experience in the Colony shows me that the most *solidly* educated women are the most useful in every department of life, and that so called 'feminine refinement' is fatal to female usefulness.

Jane Maria Atkinson
Nelson, 1870

14 Girl learning to use a microscope in a biology lesson in the 1960s.

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7

Keeping the Difference

From the mid-nineteen twenties for nearly 50 years, the question of differences between the curricula for girls and boys was not a hotly debated issue. It was left to lie, partly because it was assumed that boys and girls were being given equal opportunity, and partly because stereotypes of feminine activity were accepted with little question. Where girls took different subjects from boys, the schools were seen as providing them with comparable if not equal opportunities. So long as the labour market supplied openings in fields that had become recognized as women's work, the courses girls followed at school appeared to be adequate.

Advances for women in public life were far from spectacular. Gross inequalities in pay attracted attention and some activism but these were matters for the unions and the professional associations. Women teachers were involved but schools were unaffected. In 1933, Elizabeth McCombs took over her husband's seat as Member for Lyttelton, the first woman to enter Parliament, though women had been granted this right in 1919. In 1938, an Education Amendment Bill was passed repealing restrictions which had been imposed, for economic reasons, on the employment of married women teachers. In 1947, the clause in the Public Service Act which allowed women to be employed as shorthand writers and typists only on a temporary basis was abolished.[1] These were minor advances and women's issues were generally submerged with only occasional signs of restlessness.

In secondary schools, the great expansion of co-education may have helped to provide an illusion of equal opportunity. The task now is to trace some of the differences that continued to affect girls

from the turn of the century through to the 1970s. Five topics will be considered: (1) the teaching of home economics, (2) developments in physical education, (3) the curriculum provided for Maori girls at school, (4) the teaching of aesthetic subjects, and (5) the ethos and environment that have contributed to the expectations which women carry away from school.

During the first 25 years of the century, the broad subject areas of the curriculum were established and were to persist throughout the major educational changes of the next 50 years. A brief outline of these changes is necessary to provide a framework against which the special characteristics of the curriculum for girls can be looked at more closely.

In spite of the vision and liberal spirit of the 1929 syllabus, known in its published form as The Red Book, examinations continued to dominate life at primary school. The importance of the Proficiency Examination ensured that formal methods and discipline were maintained. Further developments suggested in the Atmore Report of 1930 were delayed by economic depression. The policy of the Labour Government which came to power in 1935, the increasing prosperity, the abolition of Proficiency in 1936 and the impact of progressive educational thought all led to greater flexibility. The way was open for the development of intermediate schools for Forms 1 and 2 pupils. Taking a lead from the American Junior High Schools, they were intended partly to ease the progression from primary schools to secondary schools which were now open to all pupils, with no free place requirements.

The opportunity to continue at school was not immediately grasped. It took further developments under the liberal influence of C. E. Beeby, Director of Education, 1940-60, to reduce the dominance of the Matriculation Examination and to further the possibility of the Government's promise to provide suitable, free education for every citizen, rich or poor, in town or country.[2] The introduction of new prescriptions and the raising of the leaving age to 15 brought an increase in numbers at secondary school. In 1942, a consultative committee under the chairmanship of William Thomas undertook a review of secondary education. This led to major and long-lasting changes. In the new *Education (Post-Primary Instruction) Regulations, 1945,* prescriptions were provided for a 'common core' of subjects and a wide list of options for the new School Certificate.

The examination would be open to all pupils, whatever their course, and would be sat at the end of three or, preferably, four years. It was in the girls' schools that the original intention of a four-year School Certificate course was maintained for some time. With only English as a compulsory subject and the possibility of presenting subjects with practical content, there was anxiety that standards would be lowered. The Principal of Avonside Girls' High School, Rona Karsten, explained the new regulations to parents in December 1945:

> With the coming year, we enter on the full working out of the new regulations. Any girl in the school who is capable of passing School Certificate in English and three other subjects may sit for this examination at the end of four years. Girls in the Home Life course may now use the subjects of Home Craft and Needlework as part of the examination programme. Girls in the Commercial course may use Shorthand-Typing as one subject and Book-keeping as another. In the Professional course, girls will have the opportunity of using their best subjects. The Department have wisely seen to it that the new School Certificate standard is to remain high. . . . Girls will need to remember that in the Home Life course as well as in the Commercial or Professional courses there is hard work to be done. . . . I want to see many more girls using the Home Life subjects *at a high standard*, for they are excellent subjects for every girl, but the course is not to be regarded as a 'least resistance' one.[3]

A system of accrediting for University Entrance in the sixth form was established in 1946 and it gradually became the practice in all schools for pupils to sit School Certificate in the fifth form. In the sixth form, most pupils would attempt University Entrance though alternative courses, leading to a Sixth Form Certificate, were provided. From 1966, Bursary examinations for university could be taken in the seventh form along with University Entrance Scholarship which remained the highest academic prize for secondary-school students. This weight of examinations in the last three years at school had not been the intention of the curriculum reformers of the 1940s. Incentives to stay on at school together with greater affluence meant that an increasingly large number of students had four or five years at secondary school, though the proportion of girls in the higher forms was noticeably lower than that of boys.

During the restless sixties there was much concentration on youth

and on making schooling relevant to their complex needs. The idea that every child has some potential and that teaching should be based on a knowledge of a student's strengths contributed to an optimistic view of education. In 1962, the Currie Commission, while confirming the primacy of the intellectual aim of schooling, had suggested a wider range of aesthetic and manual activities and greater attention to the needs of individuals within the social group.[4] Their recommendations formed the basis of much of the consultation on curricula organized by the Curriculum Development Unit which the Department of Education formed in 1963. Teachers were involved in revising the approach to their subjects and re-evaluating their aims.[5]

By this time, there had been a vast increase in the secondary school roll. From 12,514 in state secondary schools in 1925, it had risen to 200,000 in 1975. The major increase had taken place after 1945. This meant the building of new schools, mainly in the suburbs and in provincial towns. Most of the new schools were co-educational though in some growing towns the choice was made to divide existing mixed schools into separate schools for boys and girls. Attempts were made to assess local feeling. It was the opinion of the Currie Commission that co-education was not a major issue and that the importance of either segregation or association of the sexes during the day was over-rated. 'In general,' they said, 'New Zealand parents content themselves with what they have.'

The fate of some of the schools used as examples in earlier chapters illustrates the general trends. In 1963, Geraldine became the first form 1 to 6 high school; small district high schools had already begun to give way to larger high schools and some were to become 'area schools' serving large country districts. Christchurch Technical College became a polytechnic institute in 1961 and its day classes were absorbed by Hagley High School, the multi-course secondary school that had developed from Christchurch West. This process of absorbing technical courses into comprehensive high schools had been in action since the 1940s.

The staffing of girls' schools was affected by the building of co-educational schools in the suburbs. They were generally more attractive to younger women teachers. The lure of travel and the availability of teaching positions overseas in the post-war period added to the drain on staff. Principals of girls' schools had this to

cope with and, at the same time, they found themselves increasingly in the minority in relation to men who held most of the administrative posts in co-educational schools. In Christchurch in the 1950s, women were not invited to meetings of heads of schools, and women principals held their own meetings inviting senior mistresses from the mixed high schools.[6] It became apparent to some that the co-educational schools were not necessarily expanding the educational horizons for girls. One woman inspector, committed in her own philosophy to co-education, said that to go into some of the mixed high schools in the fifties and sixties was to enter a male world. She was able to name two secondary schools, Dannevirke and Gisborne, which, she believed, were exceptions where equality functioned.

It was not customary at the time to give public expression to the needs of girls. It was believed that more would be achieved by quiet acquiescence. It is significant that, in a book on the state of education in New Zealand as late as 1968, the one contribution by a woman principal concentrates on the involvement of teacher organizations in secondary education and makes no special reference to the schooling of girls.[7]

In the meantime, other changes affecting girls at school included the introduction of single-subject School Certificate passes in 1968 and of University Entrance in 1972. This allowed for far greater flexibility and, to some extent, reduced the examination bogey and the blow to confidence of complete failure. Provisions for internal assessment had a similar effect.

Despite the core curriculum which operated within the schools, it was apparent that there was a marked polarization in subject choice according to sex at the senior level. The preference of girls for arts subjects and of boys for science persisted and, once again, the girls' curriculum became a public issue.

To return to the beginning of the century and to look more closely at some specific areas of the schooling offered to girls in the following 75 years may give some insight into the questions which began to emerge. Could provisions for girls at school have been not only keeping the difference but perhaps even making the difference?

8

Learn to Keep House

The need to teach home-related subjects to girls has provided the main argument in the case for differentiation in the curricula for girls and boys. The question of their inclusion in the curriculum, especially with an element of compulsion, has been far from neutral. To some, at the turn of the century, this was simply a neglected area of education where common sense demanded change; others saw it as a threat to the great gains so far made in equal educational status and a burden on an already weighty curriculum; others again hoped it might redress the balance if, as they feared, academic education for girls had already gone too far.

This last view had been aired rhetorically many times as girls' schooling burgeoned in the eighties and nineties. The Hon. William Rolleston, one of the founders of Christchurch Girls' High School, addressing the Timaru High Schools, urged the boys to pursue their studies at the university but had a different message for 'our girls'. Great learning and intellectual pre-eminence were not inconsistent with all that was womanly but, he reminded them, the work of women began at home in the domestic circle. He drew attention to the Christian virtue that was involved in darning a pile of stockings, in boiling a potato and in cooking a mutton chop. Failure in such duties could cause unhappiness. He reinforced his own views with those of an American writer:

> Learn to keep house. If you would be a level-headed woman, if you would have right instincts and profound views, and that most subtle, graceful and irresistible of all things, womanly charm; if you would make your pen, your music, your accomplishments tell, and would give them body, character and life; if you would be a woman of genuine power and queen o'er all the earth, learn to keep house, thoroughly and practically.[1]

Increasingly, the public was asking the schools to provide training related to life. The plea came from leading men and women alike.

Developments in domestic training were widespread in the western world at the turn of the century. The United Kingdom, America, Switzerland, Sweden, Holland, Belgium and Germany were cited as countries with well-advanced schemes of domestic education. In New Zealand, the size of the population and the increasingly centralized administration made it possible for a unified practice to be the aim, though what schools offered continued to vary depending on resources, educational outlook and demand. Strong influences in the early stages came from England and more strongly from the United States and, from 1911 on, from the staff and graduates of the School of Home Science at Otago University.

Bringing domestic education into the schools was a move that struck at the core of the whole question of women's expectations. It was advocated on a variety of interrelated grounds which appear to be, in random order, (1) to elevate the image of domestic work, (2) to extend the practical content of the curriculum, (3) to apply scientific methods to realistic situations and (4) to enhance the quality of family life. To trace the development of these aims is at the same time to look at the way in which provisions for teaching home-related subjects supplied both a necessary alternative to an academic course and a response to assumptions concerning a woman's vocation.

Improving the Image

Distaste for housework was no less common at the turn of the century than it is today and was not limited to any social group, though it was the poor who were accused of neglect. How to overcome the associations of never-ending repetition and drudgery was a problem. One way was to emphasize a sense of moral duty, another was to encourage satisfaction in the task well done. More propitious was the move to elevate the image of housework by providing a proper training. This might even lead to the acceptance of paid domestic work as an occupation for better-class girls as was already happening with nursing.

Domestic service was still the most common form of paid employment for women. In 1901, the ratio of domestics to women teachers was almost six to one and to women office workers, four

115

to one. As far as can be assessed from inconsistent census figures, there were 19,180 domestic workers as against 11,817 women in the rapidly growing clothing trade.[2] There was concern that jobs in factories and offices were too easy to get, and girls were no longer willing to supply the domestic service on which many families depended. Once again, it was suggested that the future of the race was at stake, that women of the Dominion were being called upon to bear burdens too heavy to be borne; the birthrate would decline and the physique and upbringing of succeeding generations were in jeopardy.[3]

The suggested training as a bid to attract and raise the status of domestic servants was an evasion of the real reasons for the dwindling in quality and supply of such workers. There was some truth in the observation of the Minister of Education, the Hon. George Fowlds in 1909, that New Zealand did not have a large population to draw on 'to provide the various classes':[4] as other alternatives increased, women with new hopes of independence were not interested in supplying the servant class in a supposedly democratic society. Conditions of service varied but were generally oppressive: maids could be expected to work 86, even 96 hours a week at an average of about a penny-farthing an hour.[5] The hardship is recalled by those who were 'in service' early in the century. According to one, who worked for a business woman: 'I cooked and cleaned and washed and ironed for seven adults for seven shillings and sixpence a week and if I broke a saucer she would take it off my wages.'[6]

Schemes to bring maids out from England were revived but were not altogether successful, for many young immigrant women moved out into less oppressive work at the first opportunity. Others again were all too ready to accept the proposals of the surplus males in the Dominion (55,000 in 1907 and 61,000 in 1909), and so to fulfil one of the peripheral aims of the scheme – to increase the marriage rate and the possibilities of closer settlement.[7] Those who remained in service were dissatisfied. One group wrote to the *Dominion* complaining that New Zealand mistresses were not all they were 'cracked up to be'.[8]

The question of domestic training for family life became intertwined with the issue of providing a qualification for paid domestic work. Both Dr Batchelor and his opponent, Dr Emily

Siedeberg, had confused the issue in their advocacy of domestic training in schools.[9] Leaders of the women's organizations tended to speak of the two issues together so that anxiety about the supply of maids in their own middle-class homes never seems far removed from their interest in domestic education for girls. The confusion was there in statements in the popular press. One woman journalist lamented that the beautiful domestic life, once so much the characteristic of the British nation was dying out because girls were 'not being fitted for wives and mothers and daughters, lady-helps or domestic servants'. They were 'only being educated for teachers, type-writers, telegraph operators, lady clerks, cash girls, shop and factory assistants'. The remedy, she suggested, lay in 'less head work and more hand work in our schools'.[10]

Apart from some specially designed technical classes outside the day-school system, educationists were not particularly interested in training domestic servants. Other advantages of training in domestic work were emphasized, and the servant problem gradually narrowed down to the social concern of a minority group.

Some promise of emancipation from drudgery drifted in from overseas. Mrs Grace Neill who, after her outstanding work for factory conditions and nursing services, had an authoritative voice in women's affairs, brought a glimmer of hope from America. That ever-assertive nation was finding new ways of coping with the domestic difficulty:

> Many inventions are brought forward to save labour in the house – electric irons and washing machines, hot air from a central heating plant, shoe-shining establishments where boots are cleaned by electricity. The automatic telephone is in high demand and has abolished the telephone girl.[11]

Such rosy prospects did little to improve the image of the colonial housewife's daily round. Perhaps the answer lay in training. The task of the domestic science instructor, according to Professor Boys-Smith, was to 'impress upon the students that domestic work was not what they imagined it to be'.[12]

The matter of help for over-burdened mothers was to reappear from a different perspective, particularly at times when an increase in family size seemed important for the national good. More emphasis came to be placed on financial aid and pre-school services, but there were also moves to provide more domestic training and

a home aid service which should be the responsibility of the welfare state. Women whose concern was social equality became the advocates. Christina Guy, in 1943, envisaged a new order in which women would be encouraged to have large families, but their lot would be vastly improved. It was disappointing that, though more girls were taking home science, few were choosing domestic work as a career before marriage. Christobel Robinson, of the Christchurch Youth Centre, had suggested that, if the work could be raised to a profession, there would be suitable applicants, and Vocational Guidance Officers could help supply the right sort of girl for a State Service.[13] From her distinctly humanitarian standpoint, Elsie Locke, in 1951, made a plea for the status of the Home Aid and called on her well-wishers to 'battle for her recognition as a constructive asset'.[14]

The possibility of revitalizing domestic service was a lost cause by the 1920s but the hope gave some impetus to the campaign for domestic subjects in schools. The home aid scheme became a community rather than a school concern. In New Zealand, the emphasis in the curriculum was on training for the tasks of a housewife.

Practical Work

The division of manual training so that boys did woodwork and possibly metalwork while girls were taught cooking, needlework and laundrywork, was a practice that was rarely questioned from 1900 till the 1970s. There was no move of any significance to change this arrangement which was maintained on the basis of convenience and of a belief in the division of labour according to sex. The future environment of both sexes had to be considered, as the Chairman of the General Council of Education (1915) pointed out in his opening address:

> Although woodwork and metalwork might prove as useful to girls as to boys, those subjects are not of equal educational value in both cases. The teleological aspect of education cannot be disregarded and we must look to the future occupation of women – to the work in which all, more or less, will be engaged.[15]

It appeared to follow that the practical subjects of greatest value to girls were cooking, cleaning and clothing.

Standards V and VI offered the last chance for most girls to receive this practical instruction. It was not until 1928 that even half of those leaving primary school were going on to secondary education.[16] This weakened the plea for compulsory domestic training to continue beyond the primary school: most of the female population were obviously having to manage without it. The technical day schools had, as we have seen, a commitment to provide a domestic course. What was available in other secondary schools was at first spasmodic and varied according to the thinking of the principal and school governors and their view of the expectations of their particular pupils and parents.

Cooking and needlework appeared very early in the prospectuses of the girls' high schools, but they were at first extra subjects, usually provided for a fee by a visiting teacher, or at classes in the town. As an ordinary school subject, cooking was offered to some classes at Christchurch Girls' High School in 1885.[17] Two years later, Otago Girls' High School, having for some years sent girls to technical classes, now offered a course at the school.[18] Early classes in cookery tend to be associated with the names of local personalities who were pioneers in the field. In Dunedin, for instance, there was Elizabeth Miller who had started cooking classes at the hostel she ran for WCTU;[19] in Auckland, there was Miss Millington, the first of a group of English-trained instructors. Miss Rennie, the first teacher to be registered under the Manual and Technical Instruction Act, made her mark in South Canterbury and in Wellington.[20] Conditions were seldom adequate. Mrs Miller taught cooking in the Athenaeum Hall, apparently convenient for the purpose except for the lack of running water and a sink. In Wellington, Miss Rennie was allocated a shed in the City Council yard, subject to invasions of waterfront rats not unknown to drop from a beam in the middle of a lesson.

When classes were held at the schools, there were still severe limitations to practical teaching. Classes at Auckland Girls' Grammar School were 'conveniently held in the gymnasium' with stores and utensils kept in the dressing room.[21] Under such conditions, lessons were more likely to be 'demonstrative' than practical and, looking back, pupils lamented that it was impossible to learn cookery from notes.

Pupils and their parents were not always convinced that school

15 A cookery demonstration at the Ponsonby Manual Training School, Auckland, 1903.

16 Instructions for ironing a shirt, from The Southern Cross Domestic Science *book.*

1. **To iron.**
   - (*a*) The shirt must be starched in cold water starch, and left some hours before ironing.
   - (*b*) Starch the front, neckband, and cuffs, taking care to rub in the starch, but not to starch the body part of shirt.
   - (*c*) All unstarched parts must be ironed first.
   - (*d*) Double the back lengthways and iron both sides below the yoke.
   - (*e*) Iron the yoke and shoulders.
   - (*f*) Iron collar band quite dry and shape well.
   - (*g*) Iron unstarched part of the front, then the sleeves doubled, on both sides.
   - (*h*) Iron cuffs in the same way as detached cuffs and collars.
   - (*i*) Place the shirt board under the front, smooth out creases with a piece of damp muslin.
   - (*j*) Iron lightly at first from waist to neck, then more heavily till the front is smooth and stiff.
   - (*k*) Let the shirt thoroughly dry, then polish in the same way as for collars. Air well.

2. **To fold.**
   - (*a*) Place the front downwards.
   - (*b*) Fold over both sides to the width of starched front. Press with the iron.
   - (*c*) Bring the sleeves down lengthways.
   - (*d*) Fold in three, leaving the starched front on top.

was the place for such teaching. One former Nelson College pupil has said:

> I have a vivid recollection of the distinct shock it gave us girls to be told that cooking was to be introduced as a regular subject on the curriculum. Cooking indeed! That was for the home kitchen, not for the classroom, so we thought.[22]

While cooking was an intruder, needlework was naturally carried over into the girls' curriculum from the accomplishments tradition. The completion of a wearable garment became the aim of most sewing classes, though the methods of getting there were often slow. Pattern making, taught by the dictation method, with the teacher at the blackboard and the class following step by step, was common into the 1940s.[23] Emily Davies, early in the century, seeing the arrival of the ready-made garment as replacing the home-made, feared for the increased lethargy of unmarried girls living at home.[24] However, making and re-making clothes, patching and darning, turning collars and altering hem-lines were continuing feminine tasks.

Time was always a problem. The long periods demanded for practical work were difficult to time-table and, some thought, to justify. The resistance may have been more deep-rooted than it appeared. Already, girls were expected to contribute a great deal more than boys, in terms of time, to domestic chores and helping with the family. How much value was, in fact, placed on a woman's time and her liberty to apportion it?

A simple task, if carried out in the approved manner, could become complex. In laundrywork, girls in Form III were taught how to iron and fold a shirt. The housecraft syllabus, which the 1914 Education Act made mandatory for girls in their first two years at secondary school,[26] covered a range of tasks which, if carefully carried out, would deter the tempter in his quest for idle hands.

Even among those who advocated a scientific approach, there was a lingering reluctance to abandon the dutiful and wholesome practices of the past. Dr Agnes Bennett, delivering a lecture on Domestic Hygiene in 1921 advocated simple furniture so as to achieve 'less cleaning and more leisure', but could not agree that the vacuum cleaner could do the work of the 'old-time weekly turn out, sweeping with damp leaves, and probably giving a certain

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amount of sunning or beating and rubbing and airing'. Nor could she accept the new fashion for underwear of silk and crêpe de chine which could not be boiled or hung out in the sun.[27]

For some time after married women began to find their way back into the work force, the assumption remained that a housewife's day would be cheerfully filled with domestic tasks. The daily timetable for a mother of four suggested in a school text, published in 1957 and used well into the sixties, begins at 6.30 when she rises, dresses and turns down the bed. Her routine ends at 8 p.m., and allows her a 15-minute break in the morning and half an hour in the afternoon.[28] This was several years after Professor Strong had pointed out to teachers at a refresher course that a mother of young children had less freedom and leisure than anyone else in society and, even if she possessed electrical equipment, worked hours that had long been illegal in industry.[29]

The provision of facilities for practical work remained a problem in most schools. The girls' schools seem to have been more willing than boys' to introduce manual classes and to benefit from the available grants. Christchurch Girls' High School, in 1916, was receiving grants for 43 classes while at the Boys' High School there were 14 classes eligible for grants, 12 of them in experimental and natural science. It may not always have been that they were convinced of the advantages of broadening their curricula; they were so much poorer than their brother schools that any access to finance for improving their conditions and maintaining their rolls was all the more attractive. Co-educational schools, less likely to be tied to an academic tradition, were generally interested in providing for practical courses, and new schools have had the advantage of having workshops and homecraft centres included in their original plans.

Teacher training lagged behind the need. Early in the century, teachers in primary schools and a few from secondary schools attended technical classes to obtain certificates for teaching manual subjects. Girls at teachers' training college were provided with some instruction in cooking and sewing. This was given and, it seems, received for its usefulness in teaching and as a preparation for life. In 1905, a writer in the Christchurch Training College magazine welcomed the Department's awareness that teachers might marry. Pleasure in the cooking class, she claimed, showed that they were 'women first and teachers afterwards'.[30] This tendency to give

training for life skills priority over preparation for a vocation has been characteristic of girls' education in general. Whether it has been to their advantage is problematic but it has certainly been the pivot of syllabuses in practical homecraft.

The first graduates of the School of Home Science in Dunedin began to emerge in 1914. Though they brought with them a more scientific approach to their work, the practical content of their course prepared them also for work in manual training subjects. By 1927, 31 percent of those teaching domestic subjects under the education boards and at technical schools had a university qualification.[31] Graduates were in demand in the high schools for a wider range of domestic science teaching.

Scientific Method

There was a change in the approach to domestic training for girls with the possibility of making it a scientific subject. Advance came in New Zealand with the kind of male patronage which was typical of the early stages of women's social and educational reform. The chivalrous gesture, the influence in the right quarters, the financial help were all irresistible. Colonel John Studholme of Coldstream, Canterbury, former soldier and philanthropist, was fired with enthusiasm for 'the using of scientific knowledge to make our homes more beautiful and more healthy, and to ease the drudgery and burden of everyday life'.[32] In 1905, he returned from a trip to America with information about university courses in Home Economics. They were run by competent women professors and aimed to contribute to the welfare of society by the practical application of science. He made an offer to the Canterbury College Council to endow a chair of Home Science. In case they refused, he made a similar approach to Victoria College, Wellington. The eventual diversion of his offer to Otago was determined partly by chance and partly by the doubt and ambivalence which greeted it. Even supporters were not in agreement. There were those who wanted to make home science compulsory for all women studying arts and science; others opposed compulsion but saw the study of the new science as generally beneficial. One campaigner believed that if, as a result, a vast amount of home knowledge were to

permeate the system, it would be 'to the infinite betterment of the race'.[33]

In Dunedin, other donors, headed by Batchelor and King, supported Studholme and, in 1911, the School of Home Science was opened, with Winnifred Boys-Smith as professor.[34]

Here in itself was a triumph, the country's first woman professor with a faculty of her own to run. No matter that it was housed in a tin shed and, initially, had only five students. She and her associate, Gertrude Helen Rawson (later Mrs Benson), disregarded the persisting prejudice and developed a four-year degree and a three-year diploma course which had such standing that students from Australia were seeking admission.[35] When Professor Boys-Smith resigned in 1921, there were 44 students and four members of staff. Miss Rawson succeeded her as dean and, in 1922, Ann Gilchrist-Strong whose work in America had first inspired Studholme, joined her as Associate-Professor of Domestic Arts. These three women had a formative influence on home science teaching in New Zealand.

One of Professor Gilchrist-Strong's early tasks in New Zealand was to take part in an investigation of home science teaching in secondary schools. A committee was formed to draw up new prescriptions which allowed practical homecraft for Public Service Entrance, at fourth form level, to be acceptable also for Matriculation, so freeing the examination year for concentration on science.

The requirements for practical work were still regarded by some principals as an intrusion, to be fulfilled as quietly and expediently as possible. Laundrywork, for instance, could be fitted into two days at the end of the year when other more serious work was completed. The opportunity to link scientific knowledge with the domestic task was often lost. A cooking teacher could be unaware of what her pupils were learning in home science where nutrition, with the mounting interest in newly discovered vitamins, had become an increasingly important topic.

Uneasiness with the situation continued, but home science remained a compulsory subject for girls till the whole post-primary curriculum was reviewed following the Thomas Report in 1943.

Home science then disappeared as a subject and was replaced by general science, a part of the common core which was to be followed by all pupils at secondary school, at least for the first two

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years. It included nutrition and physiology and could still be taught with a home science bias. For the School Certificate Examination, general science, homecraft, clothing and embroidery could be offered.[36] This provided a wide range of home-related subjects but the element of compulsion was removed. The common core also provided for music, art or craft, and craft could be interpreted as homecraft.

There was some concern to maintain the standards set by the School of Home Science, and it is not surprising that the Home Science Alumnae expressed fears when the Department, to meet the shortage of teachers in the forties and fifties, introduced alternative training schemes at the teachers' colleges in Dunedin and Auckland. The schools were well able to use this extra supply of teachers.

The School Certificate subjects became clothing and textiles in 1970 and home economics in 1971, with suitable adjustments in the prescription to meet changes in fashion and technology. For a variety of reasons, including the fact that they did not lead on to a University Entrance subject, they were identified with courses for the less academic, and the numbers carrying either subject through to the fifth form were modest. In 1975, there were 17 percent of all girls in first-year fifth forms taking home economics compared with 39 percent taking typewriting and 52 percent taking geography.[37]

Family Life

Understanding scientific processes might illuminate the domestic task and encourage more efficient and healthier living, but it could do little towards strengthening family relationships. It was important to maintain academic credibility for home science and to guard the status of related school subjects. The topics of food, clothing and shelter lent themselves to structuring and examination and left little room for the more delicate area of personal relationships. Some thought this was the task of the family and not of the school whereas others believed that understanding of relationships would come through shared experience and was therefore a part of a girl's total schooling. Broad aims related to the well-being of the family were

basic to any course in the domestic arts. Some aspects of home science teaching were specifically directed towards such aims.

The high moral tone and unique claims of some early statements about home science imposed idealistic expectations on teachers. To aim towards 'immaculate homes' and 'the beautiful family life' now seems like an evasion of reality. To talk of helping girls to 'right living' suggests a moral certainty that excludes questioning. The needs of the nation and of the home were thought of in absolute terms.

In the early stages, some of the more constructive suggestions about training in relationships were associated with the provision of practice houses where girls might experience communal living and share the household tasks. The idea was not new. Catharine Beecher, pioneer of women's education in America and prophetess of noble domesticity, had in 1824 provided such a house at her female seminary at Hartford, Connecticut. Hostels were an integral part of many of the American schools of domestic economy. These examples as well as Mrs Gard'ner's achievements in Christchurch were cited by those who believed that at least every technical school should have such an amenity.

Studholme House, for students of the School of Home Science, was to provide an example as well as a training. Bursaries were intended to draw students from a wide range of backgrounds, but the expense involved limited the intake to those with parental support, and the training in the hostel looked ahead to marriage and household management as much as to a career. There was some pride in the fact that graduates were 'administering to homes of many men in key positions'.[38] Training was offered in creating an aesthetic environment, in hostessing, in community service and in proper social conduct.

Incorporating such training into an academic course was no doubt facilitated by the experience of living in a community. The concept of a practice house as a family was incomplete without the presence of small children. Courses in child care and mothercraft were provided, but attempts to establish a nursery school were frustrated, largely because of difficulty in securing the united support of Kindergarten and Karitane Hospital Boards.[39]

From such a training, the tendency was to formulate and pass on notions of what was correct in behaviour, in manners and in taste.

In the classroom situation home science teachers were not required to enter far into the matter of inter-personal relationships.

Very few opportunities developed for hostel-based courses, though there were some interesting experiments, mainly in boarding schools, and some attempts to provide training in social behaviour in the flats that were built into many school homecraft centres. Two experiments at independent schools attracted attention. At Woodford House from the 1940s an Arts course, catering for 20 girls not suited to the academic curriculum, started in the 1940s and continued in a modified form. They lived in a separate house, spending half their time on practical work and half on a limited academic syllabus. They ran the house, cooked some of the meals and did outdoor work which included gardening, composting, keeping fowls and chopping wood. Care was taken to see that these girls were not isolated from the normal school activities.[40] St Margaret's College in Christchurch had eight boarders living at Galwey House, with relays of day girls, seven at a time for spells of a fortnight. They learnt the principles of paintwork, staining floors, papering and soft furnishing as well as normal domestic duties and hostessing.[41] Both these courses were seen as providing satisfying alternatives in schools with an academic bias.

The funding of such practice houses was a problem in state-controlled schools. Where there was a well-developed agriculture course for boys in a co-educational school, there was an incentive to provide an equivalent for girls. This happened at Rangiora High School where, in the late 1920s, their prospectus claimed that they had a 'quite unique domestic science department, equipped with gas range, manual and power-driven sewing machines, and everything else necessary for carrying out the domestic arts by the most modern scientific and labour-saving methods'. They had the nucleus of a model cottage in which groups of girls could live for short periods under the supervision of their home science mistress. These 'cottage weeks' became a part of an elaborate scheme of home-centred studies for girls devised by the principal, J. E. Strachan, but incorporating ideas from his staff. In many respects, the scheme was forward-looking in its aim to broaden the vision of girls growing up in a rural area. There was provision for questioning, discussion and discovery through research. Strachan's outlook cannot be seen as typical but it is interesting to note that by the early 1940s questions

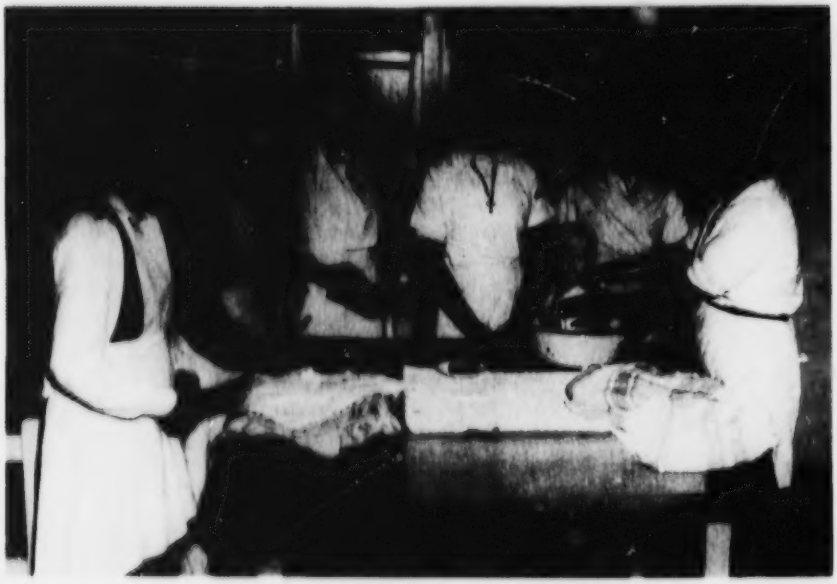
concerning women's education and its effect on the welfare of the nation were being asked with a tentative change of emphasis.

> To some extent, perhaps to a great extent, our defections are due to the fact that women, who are intimately concerned with the quality of family life, have failed or have not been able, or have not been expected, to exert the influence they might upon affairs. Is this due to defective or unsuitable education?[42]

The course at Rangiora included experience in a nursery school, begun in 1938. This course gained strength from the interest and advice of Doreen Dolton who supervised nursery schools as part of the home life courses at Avonside Girls' High School and West Christchurch High School. At Rangiora, the nursery school offered a service to the community as well as training for the girls. Mothers' afternoons were held and typed bulletins were sent out each week on subjects related to children in the home. Dinners were provided for the children, some of the vegetables being grown by the girls in the school garden.[43] Some theory of child development was taught in a syllabus drawn up by Miss Dolton. Topics included child behaviour, fear, shyness, aggression, resistance and refusals, habit training, growth changes, favourable environment and helpful adult attitudes.[44]

Practical courses in child care reflected the increasing importance placed on early childhood, and drew on the teaching of Susan Isaccs who addressed the New Education Fellowship (NEF) Conference in 1937. Courses in Canterbury attracted interest elsewhere. Veda Townsend (later, Mrs Jobberns), who was principal of Timaru Girls' High School (1943-47), established a creche at Timaru for small brothers and sisters of pupils and children of the neighbourhood and later, when she was principal at Avonside (1948-60), she encouraged development of the existing creche as part of a much broader course in family living.

Such training in the care of small children, as well as mothercraft courses, became an acceptable part of family life training. More difficult, and therefore neglected, was the whole area of adolescent development and relationships. With rare exceptions, sexuality and reproduction did not figure in home life courses. There were early attempts to air the topic with home science students, largely by the lecture method, and the School of Home Science made a start in the field of parent education.



17 Maori pupils at Whakarewarewa School learning mothercraft.

The aims of home science teaching were still to improve the quality of family living, but vague statements about the improvement of the race were replaced by more progressive educational thinking related to the needs of the individual. Dr Strong, in her address to the Home Science Alumnae Conference in 1939, pointed out that the new Social Security Act (1938) gave impetus to the prevention of disease, but the teacher's concern was the whole child. Fired by the 'educational revival' at the recent NEF Conference, she reminded her listeners that they were 'no longer tutors in any subject but must be practical psychologists and hygienists, students of life adjustments in a modern setting'.[45]

Enthusiasm for courses in family relationships was curbed by consideration for the restrictive views of some sections of the community. There was uneasiness at the official level. From 1938, when a Home Science Inspector for Secondary Schools was appointed, the inspectors have been in a position to recommend

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developments in syllabus and training. In 1955, they recommended that home science teachers should be given appropriate training for family life teaching. The reply they received from the Senior Secondary Inspector seems to indicate that the Department was unwilling to be involved:

> We quite realize the importance of Family Life Education in New Zealand but suggest the initiative regarding the course at Otago University should really come from the Home Science School itself. It does not lie with us.[46]

One of the Home Science Inspectors, Henrietta Kirkwood, returned from study leave in America in 1956 with a new challenge for New Zealand schools and colleges to gear themselves to current needs and to re-evaluate their work in the field of family relationships. She gave the outline of an introductory course which included such topics as The Role of Women in the Modern World, Men as Family Members, Psychological Aspects of Marriage, The Coming of Children, Adjustments of the Young Adult, Sex Education and Wholesome Family Life, The Effects of Divorce, The Psychology of Bereavement, The Significance of Family Life in a Democracy. She saw training of this sort as more important than the teaching of efficient ways of meeting the family's needs.[47]

The topic was given some thrust by the recent appearance of the Mazengarb Report (1954) and fears related to juvenile delinquency. However, not even home scientists themselves were entirely receptive to Miss Kirkwood's suggestions. A member of the Home Science Alumnae wrote expressing the kind of fears that have continued to surround the topic. As a mother, she was delighted with the training in clean and tidy habits in schools:

> The teaching in cleanliness is a relatively simple matter; specific instructions can be given and the results checked. How different would be the teaching of 'Family Life Relationships'.

She hoped she was wrong in assuming that teachers with training in sex education would be expected to cover such subjects in schools and reiterated the view that parent education would be more acceptable. 'Let us be very sure what we are doing,' she said, 'before any new courses are introduced into our schools.'[48]

During the late fifties and sixties, many secondary schools, the only schools free to do so, did introduce family life courses, though

these were not necessarily a part of homecraft teaching and they appeared under various titles. At the same time, almost before society was aware of it, increased job opportunities and altering child-bearing patterns had brought about a change in the role of women. In 1961, Barbara Calvert drew the attention of home scientists to the increasing trend for a woman to have a family first and a career afterwards.[49]

The now familiar call of the seventies for equal educational opportunities for both sexes led to the opening up of home life courses to boys. After 70 years of teaching woodwork to boys and cooking to girls, manual training centres began to offer opportunities, sometimes equally to boys and girls, in these subjects and, to some extent, in metal work and sewing. In secondary schools, particularly the Forms I to VII high schools and area schools, boys were able to take homecraft classes. There was some resistance, cooking was acceptable and interest in eating was high, but boys in general showed reluctance to learn sewing. A survey of pupils' attitudes to home economics subjects in Dunedin schools seems to indicate that boys in the next generation will still be expecting women to sew on their buttons.[50] More flexible time-tabling and experiments with block courses and electives made it more possible for boys and girls to take the subjects of their choice. A few boys took home economics for School Certificate, perhaps with career interests in mind, but more probably because they were simply interested in cooking. Intrinsically useful subjects, home economics and clothing have not proved to be vocational leading towards a career, least of all home science itself. Those applying for the School of Home Science are expected to have a similar background to students in other science subjects.

Home scientists at times questioned their own direction, asking themselves whether they were insisting too much on efficiency at the expense of family warmth; transmitting Pakeha notions of correct methods, tastes and behaviour without sensitivity to alternatives; perpetuating expectations of the non-working mother, queen over her domestic domain, when patterns in society were already changing. The dilemma lay in the nature of the subject and of schooling in general. Though home science teaching had to keep pace with many changes, it was more likely to be reflecting the movements in society than itself to be creating change. The hopes

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of the early moralists that the family could be fitted to the expectations of the school had been found wanting.

This is not to deny the possibility that some influence, particularly in nutrition and hygiene, had permeated from the classroom into the home.

9

Calisthenics to Canoeing

With the great proliferation of opportunities for girls in physical education and sport, it is possible to trace only a few developments. The questions which they suggest highlight the ambivalent nature of progress in girls' education in general. To what extent has participation in sport and physical exercise been a liberating force? Has it, conversely, provided opportunities for transmitting accepted values and attitudes towards appropriate feminine behaviour? To what extent has progress in sport been limited by assumptions concerning women's capabilities?

Protectiveness towards women, lack of physiological understanding and restrictive clothing had all contributed to the Victorian attitude that physical exuberance was hoydenish and unladylike. Deportment, essential to grace and social bearing, was an important part of the training of girls, and correct posture was encouraged in the interests of health. Backboards as a way of countering the sway back were used at Auckland Girls' Grammar School,[1] though the practice had largely disappeared by the turn of the century. Walking, balancing a book on the head, continued as a common exercise in erect carriage. Ease of movement was to be encouraged and this was provided for in the curriculum of girls' secondary schools by calisthenics, a branch of gymnastics designed to develop the figure and encourage gracefulness. In ancient Greece, the word had none of the effeminate connotations it acquired in Victorian England. The subject appeared on the original prospectus of Otago Girls' High School where Alexander Wilson saw great value in it and encouraged such unusually free activities as jumping and vaulting in his gymnasium. It was he who drew attention to the

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practice of placing emphasis in boys' activities on strength and in girls on beauty. 'Surely,' he said, 'a boy ought to be as beautiful as nature meant him to be and a girl as strong.' Beauty and strength could, in his view, be encouraged by exercises in the gymnasium using identical equipment for boys and girls – rings, ladders, ropes, parallel bars, dumb-bells, clubs and so on.[2]

Exercising with dumb-bells.

Early Developments in Primary Schools

English manuals for physical instruction indicated that training for boys and girls could be the same till the age of 14 and that they could be taught together. However, until the Physical Drill in Public and Native Schools Act of 1901, there was no official concern for the physical training of girls in New Zealand primary schools. Military drill for boys was firmly established and given a boost by patriotism during the Boer War. Legislation allowed for cadet corps to function in New Zealand primary schools between 1900 and 1912[3] and, marching in uniform with bands and dummy rifles, they attracted public attention. In remote country schools, girls might, for expediency, be unofficially included in the military training, as one woman looking back on her schooldays at the time of the Boer War recollects:

> Then the man teacher taught us all drill and marching and exercises with clubs, and how to handle a gun – though they were only long bits of sticks. Fighting like in war, girls and all.[4]

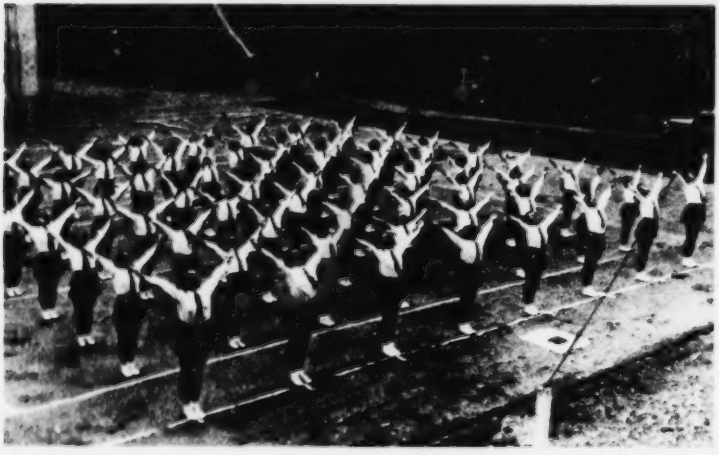
There was anxiety that infants and girls were being neglected. However, there was some enthusiasm for the new provisions and, by 1904, after three years of compulsory drill, girls were able to take part in the first of the massed displays that became annual events.

Dressed in white, standing in straight lines, they performed their rhythmic exercises, wielding dumb-bells, swinging clubs and waving wands. They provided a contrast to the boys' figure marching and military drill, and their exercises were seen by their instructors to promote good discipline and health.

The manner in which the classes were to be controlled was indicated by the advice on 'commands' in the English 1909 syllabus that was commonly used in New Zealand schools. Shouting was quite unnecessary as it gave the teacher no reserve for suddenly awakening the attention of the class.[5] Control of this sort was necessary for the set exercises, described as 'Swedish drill', that were designed to limber and strengthen the different muscle groups. The manual made little difference between boys' and girls' activities, though it emphasized the value of skipping for girls as it gave exercise to all parts of the body.

The revised English syllabus of 1920, which was officially adopted for use in New Zealand schools, placed emphasis on health and enjoyment. Games were therefore encouraged, as was dancing, particularly for girls but also for boys. Posturing was to be avoided; this ruled out such dances as the minuet, the pavane and the gavotte,

19 Mass drill at Nelson College for Girls, 1949.



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20 Partners in a barn dance.

21 Club-swinging in gym dresses, 1932.

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and modern ballroom dancing was considered equally unsuitable. The healthy gaiety of country dances was advocated.[6]

For a period during the First World War, physical education came under the control of the Medical Officer of Health. A solemn, purposeful note crept into the instructions for physical activities, particularly into those which Dr J. Renfrew White included in his book, *The Growing Body* (1924). This was to become the exclusive official syllabus for primary and secondary schools from 1932 to 1937, but it was by no means well received. With its emphasis on posture and bodily development, even the Barn Dance became a 'double deportment exercise' and an illustration of a boy and girl demonstrating the barn dance gave little impression of joy.[7]

Some training in physical education was provided in the general primary teachers' course. Women were likely to be better prepared for their task if they attended Auckland Training College where H. A. E. Milnes (principal from 1905 to 1915) found his female students more interested in physical culture than the men. He appointed a woman to instruct them in 1910, saw that all students played tennis, and encouraged outdoor netball in Auckland schools. Students of both sexes were subjected to a rigorous training. 'The longer I live,' said Milnes, 'the more I am convinced of the need of active sweating exercise followed by cold baths for all young people – it clears them physically and mentally.'[8] Classes were also provided for practising teachers, and women were urged to wear suitable clothing.

Secondary Schools and Gym Mistresses

The English syllabus adopted by New Zealand primary schools was to have an important influence on girls' secondary schools, not so much in the training suggested as in the matter of uniform. The manuals of 1909 and 1920 carried diagrams and suggestions for a blue serge tunic, with three box pleats caught into a yoke with straps over the shoulder. This garment, 'at the same time useful and becoming', was to be worn over a washable blouse and knickers which should not be visible below the tunic. It should replace all petticoats and allow greater freedom of movement.[9] As bloomers and knickerbockers for cycling were the symbols of advanced Edwardian feminism, so this uniform was to become the symbol

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With regard to the costume to be worn by women teachers at the forthcoming classes for Physical Education, the Department advises the use of the one illustrated above, particulars of which are appended.

Teachers already having costumes will probably use them; but otherwise, uniformity is desirable. The costume advised is most comfortable and suitable, and has the further advantage of being neat and smart.

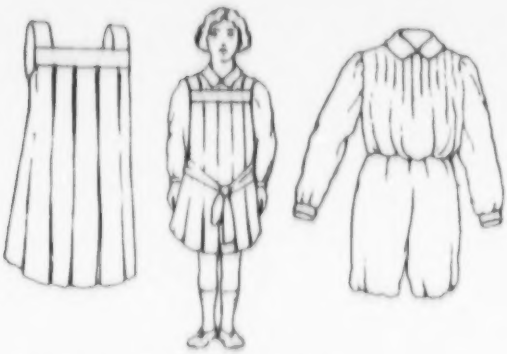
The costume is easily made, and many teachers will probably make their own. A pattern with full directions and sample costume may be seen at the Board's office. Teachers preferring to buy ready-made costumes can be supplied by the Department at a cost of 17s. 9d., postage paid. This price includes a skirt and knickers of navy serge and a navy wool jersey (the jersey can be ordered with roll collar, fastening at front, or with stand up collar, fastening on shoulder).

N.B.—Costumes can only be supplied provided the order reaches the Department on or before [illegible]

ROYD GARLICK,
Director of Physical Education.

22 Costume prescribed for physical education teachers, 1915.

of the secondary schoolgirl's arrival. Pupils at Auckland Girls' Grammar School wore the uniform for physical education in 1911, but not on the street till some years later. Even then, it was likely to have clips on the shoulder straps so that it could be worn short



23 A gym tunic, from a 1920 manual.

at school to please the gym mistress and longer on the street to satisfy a mother's sense of propriety.[10] Women teachers, required to wear the 'gym dress' themselves for training courses, were at first dismayed. During the 1920s, with only a few variations in colour, it was adopted by practically every secondary school in the country. This same uniform, sensible if not, as promised, becoming, endured until the late 1950s. By this time, the gym tunic, subject to only minor changes in length or the height of the girdle, had come to represent the perpetual adolescent schoolgirl, a favourite target of cartoonists.

Principals of girls' schools were quick to see the advantages not only of the uniform but also of healthy exercise to balance the possible debilitating effects of study. While concern was being expressed for the health of urban boys, and fitness programmes were planned because boys were deprived of the necessary use of the large muscle groups experienced by their primitive forebears and their rural contemporaries,[11] high school girls needed exercise to counteract overstrain. It was in the girls' schools that the recreative power of physical education was identified. At the same time, there was the opportunity to encourage more vigorous and healthy living. Between 1908 and 1912, gym at Nelson College for Girls was taught by the Misses Greenwood who inaugurated a keen 'no-corsets league'. In talks after prayers, girls were warned against 'tight belts, wasp waists and attendant evils'.[12]

The physical education that was provided in secondary schools

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24 Exercises with dumb-bells, Nelson, 1907.

before it became a compulsory core subject in 1946 was very much dependent on the concern of the principal and the available staff. Early in the century, girls' high schools in Dunedin and Christchurch still had their drill masters and in Nelson their sergeant major. In

25 Eurhythmic dance in the Grecian mode, Nelson, 1925.

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many towns, girls were better catered for than boys. By 1920, it was noted that many of the larger schools had a woman 'with special qualifications' fully occupied with physical education and that such a teacher was 'manifestly a valuable addition to the staff of a girls' school'.[13] It was often her enthusiasm that decided the activities in a school. A new pupil at Otago Girls' High School in 1929 wrote back to the friends she had left at Avonside.

> We have drill in a big gymnasium, but the apparatus is not used very much. Our drill and dancing are all rhythmic movements always done to music. We have no gymnastics, but Egyptian balances and Greek posture and corrective exercises. Then once a week we have Greek dancing with bare feet. We are learning a Greek Frieze to do at the break-up.[14]

It was the private protestant girls' schools that were to the fore in New Zealand in providing specialist physical education or 'gym'.[15] Well before the First World War, they had started to bring out from England teachers who had qualified, usually at Chelsea, Dartford or Bedford, women's colleges of physical culture which offered a highly reputable three-year training.[16] In the independent schools, they were given considerable opportunity to develop courses and exercise the kind of influence they would have had in English schools of a similar type. In England, we are told, at the turn of the century, 'the physical training mistress became a power in the land'.[17] In New Zealand state schools, the few English teachers who were appointed were not always so well treated, and in boys' schools there was no equivalent. There were no fixed salary scales for physical education teachers till 1945 and, as late as 1950, the physical training instructor at Otago Boys' High School was not given a place on the platform with the rest of the staff at assembly.[18]

This may seem surprising considering the prestige that is attached to sport in boys' schools, but coaching in games and athletics has not always been done by specialists. The sports mistress in a girls' school took responsibility for games, gymnastics, swimming, athletics and often for the organization of public ceremonies and any occasions that required movements of chairs and bodies. She was, in fact, a key person in maintaining the tone and discipline on which such schools depended. Keeping records of physical development, providing remedial exercises and organizing complex

systems for deportment awards were among her tasks. She was sometimes required to teach physiology and hygiene and, though her domain was separate from the academic one, she had power over it and commanded respect.

New Zealand girls began to show interest in the popular career of teaching physical culture. Unless they could be sent to England, as a handful were, they had no opportunity to do a fully specialized training. One New Zealander returning in 1908 from a two-year course in physical culture at Alexandra College, Kensington, said that the demand for trained sports teachers in England exceeded the supply. She found English girls much more given to sport than New Zealand girls, and better at most sports except horse riding. 'Beautifully turned out,' she reported, 'and splendidly mounted, they ride very badly.'[19]

The limited supply of fully trained teachers was a problem for principals. In Christchurch, Stephanie Young, Principal of St Margaret's College (1931-45) had on her staff a capable and innovative gym mistress, Nan King (later Mrs Bowie) who had trained at Chelsea. Together they devised a scheme for taking in three students a year and providing them with a two-year training course. Students came from all over the country, from state as well as independent schools. Second-year students could be used for supervision of some classes, giving Miss King time for teaching such subjects as hygiene and physiology to the first years.[20] This provided them with a theoretical and practical training and went some way towards filling a significant gap till there was a major change in the provisions for physical education training in 1941. A similar course was run by Sally Heap at Auckland Girls' Grammar School and by Grace Hutton at Epsom. Robert Stothart, writing of Physical Education in New Zealand, points out that the Department showed no interest in the work that was being done by these specialists.[21]

Available space and equipment often determined what could be done in physical education. Even in the country, abundant open space did not in itself provide easy access to sport. In New Zealand, some women's sporting activities were hedged around by privilege, but not to the extent of absolute exclusiveness as in some other countries. Many country children, both Maori and Pakeha, were growing up fully at ease on the back of a horse, but the passion

26 *Tenniquoits, a game popular in girls' schools, c. 1915.*

27 *Girls playing hockey in long skirts, 1907.*

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among schoolgirls for riding was largely a middle-class affair. Tennis was at first only for the well-to-do and, in the towns, some of the early hockey clubs were made up of young ladies who had learnt the game at secondary school. There were lively hockey games in the country, particularly in Maori communities, but it was not until basketball arrived from the United States that girls had a truly popular winter sport.

Outdoor activity was not at first considered essential for girls and it was assumed that they could manage with limited space. In the towns, they were seldom as generously supplied as their brothers. When Agnes Bennett wrote to the press pointing out the unfairness of the Wellington city fathers in providing only three-quarters of an acre as playground space for girls as against some 50 acres for boys, the chairman of the college board in his reply dismissed her letter as 'windy piffle'.[22] The tendency to trivialize women's sporting activities and to magnify the prestige of male sports has persisted, leading to unequal distribution of resources, in co-educational as in single-sex schools. An indication of deprivation and difficulty in girls' schools is given by comparing their entitlement to land with that of their brother schools (see below).

Gradually the pattern developed – tennis and swimming, if possible, in the summer, and hockey and basketball (in some cases, netball, which later became the universal game) in the winter. Cricket was more likely to be considered suitable for girls in a single-sex school. Athletic sports were annual social events with opportunity

Comparison of the Area of Grounds (in acres) in girls' and boys' State Secondary Schools, 1930[23]

	Area		Area
Auckland Grammar School	17	Auckland GGS	3
New Plymouth BHS	40	New Plymouth GHS	6½
Napier BHS	34	Napier GHS	4½
Wellington College	60	Wellington Girls' College	3
Nelson College for Boys	16	Nelson College for Girls	5
Christchurch BHS	28	Christchurch GHS	7¾
Timaru BHS	38	Timaru GHS	7¼
Waitaki BHS	25	Waitaki GHS	3½
Otago BHS	6½	Otago GHS	2½
Southland BHS	18	Southland GHS	7½

28 Garden party and sports at Wellington Girls' College, 1910.

for the display of 'house spirit'. Early programmes show a restricted view of a girl's capacity, and differences were marked in co-educational schools. The first Rangiora High School sports in 1914 were for boys only: when eventually, in 1926, girls were included, the longest race for them was 100 yards and for boys it was a mile.[24] Such persisting limitations are remembered with resentment. An athletic girl who left another Canterbury co-educational school in 1940 felt the deprivation of never having been allowed to compete over a distance of more than 220 yards. The battle for greater challenges was to continue. At the same time, girls were offered on sports day a variety of fun events which gave chances to the less vigorous. An event peculiar to girls' secondary schools was throwing-the-cricket-ball which appears to have developed from the English boarding-school ritual of 'chucking'.[25]

29 Girls' swimming sports at the Nelson Public Baths, 1927.

30 Physical education at Wellington Girls' College in the 1930s.

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Swimming sports were popular from early in the century when neck-to-ankle bathing dresses were worn and male relatives were not allowed to join the spectators.[26] Training for life-saving badges became a special interest in girls' schools.

'Gym' was the subject which replaced calisthenics in girls' schools and provided general physical training, depending for its bias and effectiveness on the experience of the teacher. By the early 1930s, some girls' schools had a well-equipped gymnasium which, in many cases, doubled as an assembly hall. This simulated jungle would be provided with rib-stalls, climbing ropes, vaulting horse and boxes, spring board, balancing forms and beams. A common practice was to provide 'gym' classes as a form of general physical culture for all pupils, with more advanced gymnastics only for a selected few. In some cases the main content was formal exercises.

The sports mistress had a strong influence on a school's prowess in any particular sporting activity. If she were a hockey player, basketball teams were less likely to be successful though this was the game which every school played in one form or another. Netball, from England, was introduced at Otago Girls' High School in 1902,[27] and some schools were playing basketball before the First World War. It had been invented by a student of the YMCA training school in the United States in 1891 and was advocated by the American Physical Education Association as the best game for girls. In the early 1920s, H. E. Longworth, the New Zealand Education Department's Chief Physical Instructor, wrote enthusiastically about the game:

> The beneficial effects upon the future womanhood of this country cannot be over-estimated if it is played as near international rules as possible.[28]

Hockey was regarded as a less feminine game, and sporting journalists treated women's efforts with mild derision. Anxiety about girls' participation continued, particularly among mothers who had played no games themselves.

Some instructors trained in England were disappointed to find no opportunity in New Zealand to show their prowess at lacrosse. It had been introduced into English schools after a headmistress from an English sporting boarding school had seen it played by North American Indians and pronounced it 'perfect for girls'.[29] The one

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or two schools where an enthusiast started the game in New Zealand gave up because there was no competition. For most New Zealand girls, it belonged to the realm of schoolgirl fiction.

Also to the school story, notably to the books of Angela Brazil, belonged the heroics attached to schoolgirl sport. Many New Zealand girls discounted these stories, finding the characters priggish and the background remote, but the books were still widely read. Schoolgirl heroines were more likely to be sporty than brainy. Though in fiction enthusiasm was exaggerated and the uneasiness about compulsory games ignored, the books of Angela Brazil seem to have served a purpose at the time, indicating that girls were capable of physical activity just as much as boys.[30] Awareness of schoolgirl liberation was more self-conscious in fiction and was bound to diminish with time.

Some girls of independent spirit reacted against the controls inherent in the nature of sport. Questions of morality and self-discipline became involved with the mastery of physical skill. The English view, which New Zealand largely followed, was clearly put by B. A. Clough, niece and biographer of the pioneer educationist, Anne Clough:

> Games, I do believe, drive out much silliness, they occupy vacant space, and they also produce an antiseptic atmosphere.[31]

Margaret Lorimer, at Nelson College for Girls during the twenties, saw games as 'the best corrective to the morbidity and sentimentality of the adolescent period'.[32] Stevie Smith (the English poet) in her poem 'Girls' tilts at the sexual overtones in the instructions of 'Miss So-and-So whose greatest pride/Is to remain always in the VI Form and not let down the side.'[33] The question of the use of sport as a means of social and individual control is a wide one which applies to boys' training at least as much as to girls'. It was an area in which the 'gym mistress' was expected to play her part.

Vital Change

How to provide physical training that would benefit all pupils was the main concern of those responsible for major developments in physical education in New Zealand schools in the early 1940s. Till

31 Girls at leap frog, wearing the new rompers, c. 1945.

then, growth had been piecemeal. Now, according to the Director, Dr C. E. Beeby, sport for the multitude and not just for the favoured few was becoming a recognized part of school activity.[34] A new national organizer for physical education, Philip Smithells, appointed in 1938, introduced a very broad concept of training that was in keeping with expectations which had been raised concerning education in general at the NEF conference in 1937. Smithells recognized what was being done in a number of girls' schools and was anxious to build on to local developments.[35]

> In New Zealand we shall develop and evolve our own method. . . . We shall use, too, what is indigenous here, Maori activities.[36]

Recognizing that physical education as a whole was being neglected

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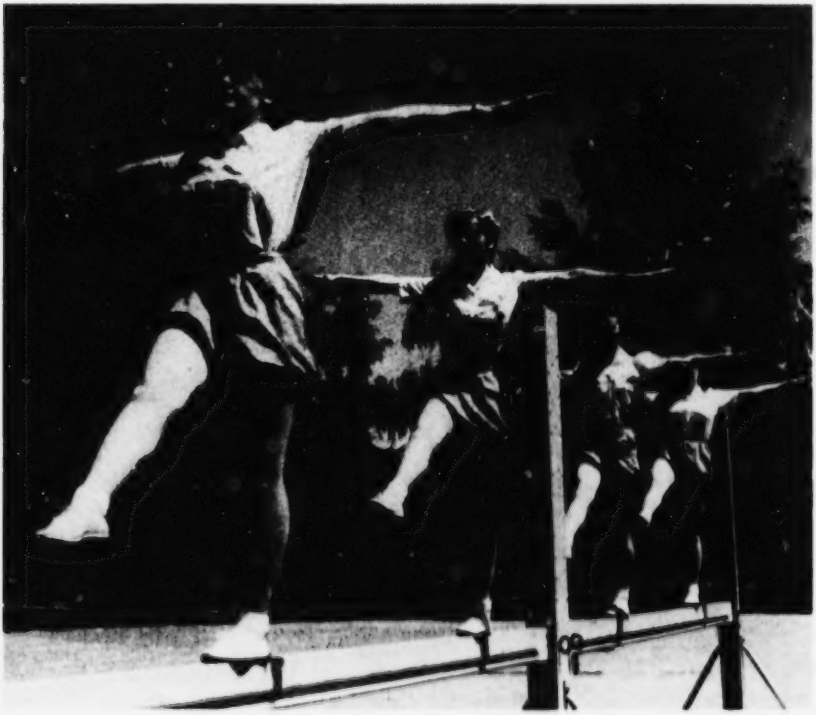

32 Balancing exercise at Hastings High School, c. 1950.

for football and basketball, the Department set out to introduce numbers of teachers to a new approach through refresher courses. They were given copies of the English 1933 syllabus and articles appeared in the Education Gazette on the use of music, rhythm, folk dance, swimming baths, Maori games, ball-handling and ground exercises on mats.[37]

Relaxation and freedom had not been part of the old 'drill'. Lessons were now quite likely to start with an instruction, 'Run anywhere – GO!' There were some complaints that, with the 'new drill', pupils went on in an excited state to their next class.[38]

For girls, any new developments in physical activity have been

associated with complaints about the required clothing. Rompers or shorts were now in. They had already been worn for gym and athletics in secondary schools, but protests appeared in the press during 1941 as girls who did not appear with the appropriate uniform were encouraged to tuck their dresses into their pants. Again the public looked askance at teachers who appeared in the new rompers.

Initially, the aim was to revitalize teaching in the primary schools. Extra training was provided to third-year students who, in war time, were mostly women, and area organizers were appointed to assist teachers. There was considerable overlap into the secondary schools where major benefits were to come when a diploma course was established at Otago University with Philip Smithells as its director. The need to import specialists dwindled and a career towards which many girls had a leaning became accessible.

The fact that it was introduced in war time gave impetus to the physical education drive. While attention was drawn to the need to improve the physique of men entering the forces, there was, at the same time, emphasis on the needs of girls. There was an ideological content, based on a reaction against the image that was presented of totalitarian states in Europe. Newsreel films of organizations of Hitler Youth gave a frightening picture of regimentation. It was pointed out that in Germany, they were 'building good bodies with unthinking minds . . . using the joy of movement to stultify the critical faculties'.[39]

With the implementation of the Thomas Report in 1945, physical education became a core subject, obligatory for third, fourth and fifth formers for at least one hour a week. Enthusiasm for sport among girls has always been counter-balanced by some reluctance and lethargy. So long as the myth persisted that vigorous activity was harmful during menstruation, excuse notes were easily accepted, and sensitivity to a girl's discomfort often made it difficult to get to the bottom of her reasons for avoiding exercise. It has also led to questions about the validity of expecting everyone to participate, particularly in team sport.

One of the major changes in the sixties and seventies was the considerably greater variety of sports available. In one girls' school alone, it was possible to find 26 netball teams, 5 hockey and 2 soccer, and, according to the principal, they would have had rugby if her permission had been forthcoming. In addition, they had tennis,

cricket, volley ball, indoor basketball, Junior League (basketball), canoeing, life-saving, squash and a tramping club as well as swimming and athletics. Yachting, fencing and orienteering were offered in other schools. Programmes in outdoor education and optional leisure sports were introduced into most schools in an attempt to swing the emphasis from competitive team games. If it is true that girls lack the aggression for competitive sport, these innovations could have been to their particular advantage, but it is more likely that boys and girls alike have benefited from being able to choose activities where individuality and interest are more important than team spirit and highly developed skill. To some extent, these changes have balanced the requirements for very intensive training at an early age that have entered into competitive sport. They are, what is more, compatible with the growing recognition of education as a life-long process.

Inequalities and Folklore

When Edwardian young women abandoned their whale-boned corsets and donned their knickerbockers to bestride their bicycles, they were making a conscious bid for liberation. The schoolgirl who ranged over the hockey field in ankle-length skirt no doubt found new freedom in exchanging it for a tunic four inches above the knee. Her daughter in the 1930s who discarded the corselet because it was an impossible garment when it came to changing into rompers for gym had a sense of relief from discomfort. With access to far greater freedom of movement and corresponding change in sports fashions, a liberating force was undoubtedly at work. Campaigning zeal appears to have diminished at each advance. The greater variety in sports activities at school and the opportunities to develop skills have given some girls confidence and opened up areas of satisfaction beyond school.

It is here that girls have been reminded that their education has, in fact, been different from boys', and their opportunities cannot be the same, however much improved they may be. Often, they are able to share facilities but, for their own sports, they have nothing like the well-kept fields and expensive stadia that are provided, frequently with commercial backing, for prestige male sports. It does

not come as a surprise, as family attitudes and school practices have already encouraged them to accept this discrimination as a fact of life and geared them to gravitate towards male sport for spectator interest. Generally, the notion that men are better at sport is accepted, and girls are willing to allow them this superiority. The 'fear-of-success' syndrome which is said to hold girls back in academic competition with boys is likely to operate more strongly in sport.[40] For this reason, and because it involves sport selected on the basis of its suitability for girls, school physical education can be seen as having transmittted socially accepted notions of femininity.

Many of the myths concerning physical activity for women have largely been exploded. It has long been known that exertion in youth does not subtract from the 'pelvic power' a woman might need to store for childbirth;[41] that physical exercise is not normally one of the causes of menstrual cramp and is more likely to prevent it; that the menstrual cycle will not be upset if a girl takes regular exercise.[42] Folklore has not entirely lost its hold, but physical education has brought with it enlightenment and common sense. Many assumptions have persisted, however, about the extent of a girl's capabilities, and have had an inhibiting effect in the continuing drive to raise the level of challenges in women's sport.

While the movement in girls' physical education has been towards far greater freedom of activity and opportunity, it can at the same time be seen as an area where inequality has lingered.

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Aesthetic Subjects

Schools in New Zealand at the turn of the century did not provide the atmosphere or the physical surroundings to inspire the creative imagination. Buildings were utilitarian, even dreary. In primary schools, high windows and macrocapa hedges shut out any images that might have come in from the countryside. Towns, which had grown rapidly and in disorderly fashion, were not likely to shelter an 'urban muse', and they harboured few man-made treasures to stir a sense of wonder. The cultural atmosphere could be stifling, and artists, writers and musicians felt the need to escape. Where, in some societies, upward social mobility included entrée into a cultural elite, this was not a significant factor in New Zealand where philistinism carried no social stigma. There was, however, some superficial competitiveness attached to the accomplishments which women might pursue.

The development of aesthetic sensibilities was not a function of the frugal primary schools in the early years of the century. A New Zealand inspector, observing English elementary schools in the 1920s was aware of this deficiency and wondered whether the English practice of having, beyond the infant level, separate girls' departments with women in charge allowed for freer development:

> It gives full scope to woman's ingenuity and defiance of convention (I found your Girls' Departments more progressive than the Boys'). It certainly seems to give the girls a more thorough training in the refinements of life; the aesthetic element is much more strongly stressed than with us.[1]

Nevertheless, singing was compulsory in our primary schools and a young woman could be turned down from entering training college because she could not sing.[2] A supervisor of school music

appointed in 1926 reported a narrow outlook in school music. He introduced vacation courses, produced a handbook and had pianos and gramophones supplied to the schools in order to raise and enliven the standard of teaching.[3] It was suggested that the power of radio should not be ignored. A woman trained in Dalcroze eurhythmics was appointed to Wellington Training College, and some schools started experimenting with percussion bands and the composition of simple melodies,[4] though it was some time before creative music making became common.

Drawing at the primary school level was, in the same period, largely a training in exactness. Freehand drawing, in which all girls, being exempt from geometrical drawing, were examined, was anything but free. It involved looking at an article, or a drawing of an article, which was then removed from sight while the class reproduced it on paper, observing rules of line and perspective. This was different from 'drawing from objects' where even greater exactness was required. There was little encouragement for the creative spirit. A love of art was likely, in Toss Woollaston's experience, to be submerged 'in a dreariness of smooth shading and vanishing perspective'.[5]

Entering into the realm of feelings was incongruous in the classroom: progressivism encouraged creativity but its messages were not always acceptable. Teachers might have read in the *New Zealand Schoolmaster* in 1907:

> The aim of education in its highest sense should be the proper cultivation of the feelings, and it is a sound educational principle that the instinctive desires or 'hungers' of the soul must be catered for as they arise if the mental powers of children are to attain their fullest and highest development.[6]

The 'Red Book' in 1929 brought in wider prescriptions in music and drawing aiming at 'a more fully cultural type of education',[7] but the writers recognized that much depended on the conception which teachers had of their task. With richer development in creative activities in primary schools in the late thirties and in the forties, it was still possible for a teacher's expectations and standards of selection to deaden or enliven the imagination. The works chosen to adorn classroom walls were an immediate revelation, and the more adventurous the range, the less easy it was to distinguish girls'

drawings from boys'. It has been observed that New Zealand boys' first drawings are of anything that is mobile – trucks, planes or, in the country, horses – and New Zealand girls' are of houses.[8] The process by which women become interior decorators, flower painters and highly skilled botanical artists while men design aircraft, build bridges and become nautical architects begins early.

In girls' secondary schools, there was a carry-over from the teaching of accomplishments and, in spite of pressure from the examination syllabus, opportunities in the creative and performing arts were maintained for a number of reasons: they had a broadening influence and were a source of delight; they provided a balance; they fitted in with the general encouragement for girls to be ladylike; they were linked with the literary emphasis in the girls' curriculum.

For women who were likely to have more leisure, artistic interests might open up areas of satisfaction. The aesthetic movement of the Edwardian era brought a fashion for dabbling in cultural activities and even an acquaintance with the arts might, for women, fill the idle hours:

> In the room the women come and go
> Talking of Michelangelo.[9]

In the community, there were some men and women willing to share their talents by giving lessons. Social striving pervaded their advertisements and credentials: teachers of dancing, deportment and calisthenics, of voice production, vocalization and diaphragmatic breathing, of drawing and elocution were outnumbered by teachers of pianoforte. Among them were those who claimed to have achieved high examination passes; to have been trained by French, German and Italian masters; to have studied music 'At Home' for several years; to have 'taught at bishopscourt' and to have 'received visits and mementos from such people as Beethoven's last surviving pupil'.[10] Some of these, and colleagues who had less need to advertise, were available as visiting teachers in girls' schools.

The teaching of art in secondary schools was, from 1900, somewhat circumscribed by its association with grants for manual and technical instruction, though it was in the technical colleges themselves that some of the most original work was done. In boys' schools, if art was taught at all, it was usually with a vocational aim and was linked with the exact sciences or technical subjects. Girls'

33 *Art class in progress at Wanganui Girls' College, 1903.*

schools offered a wider range of non-examinable subjects. Christchurch Girls' High School, in order to claim capitation grants, had to provide a report of its activities in 1901:

> Drawing is taught throughout the school as one of the ordinary subjects of instruction. The classes are conducted by a specially appointed certificated art teacher, and the course of instruction includes freehand, elementary model, drawing from the cast, elementary light and shade, elementary original design and brushwork.[11]

'Drawing from the cast' or 'in the round' meant using plaster casts of famous pieces of sculpture as models. The presence of replicas of Greek statues and Roman busts continued to haunt girls' schools long after the practice of 'drawing in the round' had been dropped.

All girls' schools had their visiting art teachers who left behind them legends of inspiration and idiosyncracy. Their classes were usually for those who already showed some hint of artistic talent but their influence was often wider as they carried with them the

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34 *Pottery class at Avondale College, 1948.*

aura of the practising artist. One such familiar figure in Wellington was Dorothy K. Richmond who taught at Miss Baber's School (later Marsden) for 20 years from 1904. A former pupil describes her method as permissive, not labouring the importance of drawing or perspective but encouraging the expression of feelings:

> We knew she had studied at the Slade, and in Europe – she was marvellously Bohemian, but not at all disdainful, or in any way irresponsible, and the release we felt in working with her depended directly on her luminous personality.[12]

Because art and crafts were frequently extra subjects on the curriculum, many students missed out. The committee of the General Council of Education considering girls' needs felt that it would be to the advantage of girls if every encouragement could be given to their aesthetic education and that such subjects as music, elocution and art needlework should be examinable for Senior Free Place.[13]

The crafts that were offered at girls' schools depended on the interests of teachers. Wood carving, which was offered as an extra at Wellington Girls' College, lost its appeal to girls with changing fashion. Some of the convent schools made a special feature of fine needlework. Girls' schools were sometimes criticized for dilettantism and for teaching 'trivial crafts', but most were ready to acquire weaving looms and pottery kilns and to experiment with different materials when the opportunity came.

Doubts about music as a subject for boys stretched back to Plato. The Guardians in his Republic were not to be allowed music that was 'effeminate and convivial' but only that which might be appropriate for solemn deeds and bravery in arms, that would imitate the tones of men 'in a temperate and in a courageous mood'.[14] Music of a martial character, brass bands and patriotic singing, were heard in boys' schools at the turn of the century, but there was little encouragement for anything of a gentler mood. When girls were included at Auckland Grammar School (though taught entirely separately), the possibility of class singing was tentatively raised. The headmaster, H. M. Bourne, made it clear that they were at the Grammar School to prepare for examinations and to uphold the school's reputation against southern rivals; there was no time to spare for singing. He was highly critical of the fact that girls were

released from class to attend music lessons, a practice which has continued to irk teaching staff in some girls' schools.[15]

The piano in homes up and down New Zealand assumed a position of great importance and it was every mother's ambition that her daughters would master the instrument. Having piano lessons (like attending ballet classes) was as much a part of a proper upbringing as being dosed with Lane's Emulsion and bathed with Pears soap. Alexander Wilson was not convinced of its place in a girl's education. He suggested that too much time and money were spent on 'running the fingers for a certain time every day along the keys of a piano' if the pianist were to have only dexterity and no soul in her accomplishment.[16]

In some towns, the local convent provided music lessons, mainly in piano but also in singing and instrumental music, for the public as well as for pupils in their own schools. In small Catholic secondary schools, it was not unusual for every girl to have piano lessons. One of the reasons given was that it was necessary for those who wanted to be teachers, particularly in primary schools and kindergartens.

It was by no means easy to manage the massed school singing that was expected of some music teachers. Kate Edger at Nelson College for Girls invited Herr Lemmer of the Nelson School of Music to teach singing for an hour a week. He took 'almost' the whole school, hoping that the poor and reluctant ones would be weeded out. Massed singing was an expected part of school celebrations, and selected choirs gave those with some talent a more musical training.[17] It was thought that singing would assist in speech training and in counteracting the 'colonial twang'.

In some co-educational schools, the girls were taken for singing while the boys had cadets. This was the practice at Ashburton High School in the 1940s till Veda Townsend, having on one occasion been asked to take the boys, found that they enjoyed it. The practice was continued, with separate weekly singing classes, and soon the boys were asking if they, like the girls, could have a Saturday morning music club.[18] This was one way of providing musical appreciation, which was often crowded out of the school curriculum. Otago Girls' High School, in the 1930s, had a Music in the Homes Club, and girls were encouraged to play to one another in their own houses: in the 1950s, they started a Chamber Music Club.[19] Boys and girls found

35 *Chamber music at Nelson College for Girls, 1964.*

other outlets for their musical talents, particularly in Saturday morning classes for instrumental music groups.

Official encouragement for education in the arts often embraced the moralistic purpose of improving the taste of the nation. This was seldom the aim of teachers. Themselves creative and imaginative people, their influence depended on their being given freedom to develop their ideas. Where this happened, some schools, like King Edward Technical College in Dunedin and, later, Avondale College in Auckland, attracted students and staff because of their music courses, and the art classes at Wellington Technical College drew promising students from other schools.

The major curriculum recommendations concerning the arts came in the Thomas Report in 1942. William Thomas himself was an able musician, and the recommendations which he and his committee produced bear a close relationship to what he had already tried to put into practice at Timaru Boys' High School while he was Rector (1913-35). He was aware that his conservative male colleagues would

not favour the introduction of more non-academic subjects, but to him an important aim of education was to develop the emotional and spiritual side of a boy's life, and he believed that a boy who was going to be a good plumber or carpenter was as much entitled to a cultural education as one aiming at the professions.[20] 'Some people,' he said, 'may think we make too much of music in this, a boys' school', but he was convinced of the need for musical appreciation, and, in his own school, he introduced instrumental music, art, drama and elocution. The Thomas Committee's recommendations for music, art and crafts as essential subjects in the common core reflect his thinking.

In 1942, there was evidence that nearly all secondary schools offered singing, that many had a brass band, an orchestra, a pipe band, a school choir, and that some produced interesting work in arts and crafts, but there was no clear sign of creativity vitality.[21] The girls' schools were, in general, well prepared to implement the requirements for aesthetic training as part of the common core, and girls continued, more frequently than boys, to advance art to higher levels. In 1975, there were more than twice as many girls as boys taking art at sixth and seventh form level.[22]

Girls' schools have records of a wide variety of dramatic activities, from the large-scale pageants and tableaux vivants on patriotic themes in the early years of the century to the avant-garde drama and home-grown musicals of the seventies. Shakespeare took his place beside Quality Street and the Mad Hatter's Tea Party. Drama was intended, in the early years, to encourage the graces of poise and good diction and, as in other areas of the creative arts, the possibilities of freer, more imaginative expression emerged later. Though single-sex performances pose problems, as they did in Shakespeare's day, and proper comparisons are impossible, some teachers claim that the most creative productions have been in the single-sex schools, particularly the boys' schools.

Beyond the primary schools, boys wanting to learn dancing of any kind have usually had to go outside the school. Even in girls' schools, dancing that was not associated with physical education was an extra. Ballet dancing was encouraged because, along with the other accomplishments, it showed that the womanly qualities were not being neglected, it provided a girl with training in the social graces and therefore enhanced her nubility. To some extent,

36 Junior girls participating in creative drama in the 1960s.

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ballroom dancing had a similar function, with the added advantage that it might, though not necessarily, be taught with male partners. Modern dance brought new modes of expression.

Art and music at examination level attracted boys and girls with special talent. This left some concern for those who might want to enjoy the arts as listeners and observers. Early in the century some girls' schools had classes in art and music appreciation. At Miss Baber's School courses in great art and architecture were linked with studies in history and literature.[23] Sacred Heart Convent at Island Bay, from its inception in 1905, had courses in the history of art, the history of architecture and musical appreciation.[24] In these two schools in the capital, as in other city boarding schools, part of the training offered was the opportunity to go to concerts and theatres and, occasionally, to art exhibitions. There were memories of rare treats – Sybil Thorndike as Saint Joan and Medea, Pavlova in 1926, the Borovansky Ballet in the thirties. It was not until after the Second World War that, less exclusively, the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, the New Zealand Theatre Company, and, later, the New Zealand Ballet Company offered performances to schools during the day. The introduction of Art History as a subject for University Entrance in 1968 and University Bursary in 1972 gave opportunities in a subject which, even in girls' schools where it had once been offered, had been eased out.

The Thomas Report recommended the study of the art of film and radio.[25] The arrival of television and then video equipment made this a much more realistic exercise for schools and offered fresh areas of creativity. It brought also some anxiety about the conditioning power of the media and increased the need for education which, as a counter to passive receptivity, would include active participation in the arts.

The response to increased opportunities in the arts is hard to measure. It can no longer be claimed that art, music and drama are girls' subjects, though the expectation that women more than men might need creative leisure interests has lingered. Given the limited career opportunities in the arts in New Zealand and the pressure in the case of boys to ensure that school provided a springboard if not a preparation for future employment, there were plausible reasons for the neglect of time-consuming creative subjects in some boys' courses. Though girls have been faced with a similar dilemma,

it seems that they have been more likely to choose what they would enjoy, and undoubtedly the constraints on boys to conform to traditional courses have been greater.

37 Art class at Ngata College, 1960.

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Maori Girls at School

From early colonial times, Maori girls in their education had a double obstacle to surmount. Not only were they, together with their brothers, at least a lap behind Pakeha youths in their families' acceptance and understanding of formal education; they were also bound by long-established tribal traditions which prescribed what a woman could and could not do. In Maori attitudes towards a woman's place, there was, on the surface, little conflict with the Victorian espousal of a limited domestic sphere. In pre-European village life, a Maori girl was expected from an early age to receive instruction in the special tasks of a woman, which included gathering and preparing food and weaving garments. On her skill in these activities, her attractiveness as a marriage partner depended. Such lore was instilled by the repeated proverbs of the *kuia* and by the chanted songs of children's games: *Mawai e moe te wahine/Mangare ki te watu puere?* (Who will marry a woman too lazy to weave garments?)[1]

As they acquired the skills of garment making, girls would develop pride in themselves, in their appearance and deportment. The importance of training in dignity of bearing is suggested in the old proverb: 'Massage the legs of your daughters that they may walk with dignity the plains of Gisborne.'[2] Grace and dignity were also acquired through dancing, particularly the *poi*, which was largely a feminine art. A girl would not be admitted to the *whare wananga* where the sons of the aristocracy, chiefs and *tohunga*, were groomed to become purveyors of tribal lore, but she might learn the history and legends of her tribe from her elders who would, at the same time, pass on to her the norms and mores of society.

At the same time, girls were acquiring certain attitudes towards parenthood and childrearing through community education, that is, the informal learning of the *whanau*. The middle years of childhood might, for a Maori girl, have been independent by European standards, subject at times to the uneven demands and discipline of parents or other adults in the community.[3] Adult responsibilities and the care of younger children would soon be expected of her.

When a Maori girl at the turn of the century made the leap from the *whanau* to the rigidity of the classroom, she carried with her an acquired understanding of her own position. Deep-seated attitudes and mores were likely to persist alongside the European values which the colonists hoped to implant through schooling. For this reason, some Maori women feel they have grown up with a double barrage of role expectations to overcome. In the light of this view, the aim of this chapter will be to consider the extent to which these expectations have been borne out in the curriculum offered to Maori girls in this century. Some studies of Maori youth have concentrated on boys and incidental references to girls have been slight. In some recent writing on the history of Maori education, there is a more noticeable balance.[4] The purpose here is not so much to compare what was offered to boys and to girls as to consider the ways in which young Maori women were being prepared for their roles in a changing society. The village school, a boarding school for Maori girls and a high school with a large Maori roll will be taken as examples.

The very important more recent development of large urban schools with high enrolments of Maori and Pacific Island students is beyond the scope of this historical study. Similarly, the inevitable questioning of assumptions about appropriate school curricula in the light of changing employment opportunities can only be touched upon.

The term 'Maori' is used, as is common practice, for those with Maori ancestry who identify themselves as Maori. It is recognized that, with inter-marriage and inter-cultural activities, individual Maori women may at different times make choices concerning their own cultural identity.

The Maori Village School

In 1900, as well as a handful of mission schools and the normal public schools, there were 89 Maori village schools, mostly in the North Island, attended alike by Maori girls and boys.[5] These Native Schools* (open also to local Pakeha children) functioned at first under a different code from that of public schools. They had a wider allocation of supplies and were under the wing of specially appointed inspectors. Though there is evidence that Maori people prized the education available, diffidence, isolation and the demands of families and seasonal work accounted for irregular attendance and the uncertain existence of some schools. Although teachers were often untrained, there was a general feeling that Maori children fared better in these schools where they were often on their own and always in the ascendancy.[6]

Most of the schoolwork was initially formal drill in arithmetic and English, but the Maori language was permitted at first for purposes of explanation in junior classes.[7] Maori women needed a European education so that they would have at least elementary skills to perform their tasks of purchasing and providing. They had, moreover, a key role to play in transferring to the next generation an acceptance of school attendance as a normal part of their upbringing. The imposed routine was an interruption in the rhythm of their lives. Maori girls often started school late (as, indeed, did many European children in isolated areas), and it was not unusual for them to be beginning work at the level of the primers when they were already in their teens. Many left from Standard III, few went on to Proficiency and no more than this was expected of them. Their intelligence was not in question, but the hurdle of being educated in a foreign culture was considerable. While some would be seeking employment most young Maori women would be expected to assume their customary role in their own community where, at an early age, they would take on the responsibilities of motherhood. It was for this task that they were to be educated. In 1904, Maui Pomare, Health Officer to the Maori, said:

> Strike the mothers and you strike the entire rising generation. . . . The hygiene of the home, personal dress, the science of cookery, the nursing

*In 1945, the term Native School was dropped in favour of Maori School.

> of the sick, the upbringing of babies: these are the essentials that ought to be taught in every Maori school in the country.[8]

Qualities and achievements that were valued in Maori society were seldom recognized at school. Exuberance and spontaneity were curbed: a school would be commended when attention was so controlled that there was 'no room for whispering or trifling'.[9] In some schools, punishment prevented conversation in the Maori language though most communities were so remote that the children were unlikely to hear English spoken outside the school. This was a practice which became hardened during the early years of the twentieth century.[10] By 1903, the Inspector of Maori Schools, James Pope, who had begun to advocate the direct method of teaching English, was critical of the use of Maori in a lesson and described such practice as an anachronism.[11]

Maori singing and dancing, for which the girls had aptitude and training, were generally forbidden. An early pupil at Ruatoki recalled:

> Rotu and I were the entertainers and we were well known for our vitality, grace and talent in Maori action songs, *waiata* and *haka*. Indeed, I composed many songs that were popular in the district. But action songs were never allowed in the school, nor was the speaking of Maori, but what could we do when we knew no other language?[12]

Reporting in 1905 on schools in this area, the Urewera district, the inspector observed that the dancing of *poi* and *haka* which had taken place during the year had had an unsettling effect. There was a proposal to take a troupe to Australia, but this was viewed with alarm. The fear was that such commercialization of their arts could have a degrading effect on Maori youth, turning them into gipsy types when they were capable of doing better and higher work than 'serving as occasional ministers of pleasure and amusement to the Pakeha'.[13] Singing at school was, like the rest of their syllabus, in the English tradition. The authorities thought it desirable that Maori children should 'acquire a taste for music generally', and, to this end, they offered a pound for pound subsidy if the district wished to purchase a harmonium.[14] Maori children had little difficulty in running up the tonic *sol fa* scale or in singing rounds and the songs of Stephen Foster from a given note on a tuning fork.[15] Lack of training in 'the mechanics of notation'[16] was deplored by the inspectors.

The colonialist policy was that Maori people should be assimilated into the European way of life, and education was a vital agent in achieving this. The aims were rationalized and explained as carefully as possible to pupils in the schools. James Pope, who was warmly esteemed by the Maori people, addressed senior primary school classes in his *Health Reader for the Maori:*

> When two different races of men have to live together, the race that, through any cause, is more ignorant, weaker in numbers, and poorer than the other must learn the good customs of the stronger people or else surely die out.[17]

On matters of health, much direct advice was given in this book, particularly concerning consumption, skin sores and the consequences of strong drink. The authorities felt a proper responsibility to counteract disease, and the schools were used to spread knowledge and inculcate hygienic habits. Supplies of cod liver oil, sulphur ointment, soap and, later, hot water, were among the special allowances for village schools.

As familiarity with Maori courtesies and customs was not a prerequisite for teaching in a village school, misunderstandings were bound to arise. Pupils who submitted to regular searchings for head lice, for example, suffered shame: for Maori people, the head is a venerated part of the body and for a stranger to touch it is a profanity.[18] For girls, there was their own code of modesty, not altogether in line with Victorian prudery, but they were likely to react to any intrusion into their own sense of right and wrong, as well as to loss of face, with a retreat into shyness. This characteristic to a Maori may be a grace, *whakama*, but, by Pakeha teachers, it has often been interpreted as sullenness or resentment.[19]

In the domestic training provided for Maori girls, there was emphasis on the laws of health and nutrition. With limited opportunities for practical work, arrangements could be made for cooking, cleaning and laundrywork to be taught in the schoolmaster's house where older girls, under the supervision of the master's wife, might live in for a month at a time.[20] A male teacher in a village school was, until 1934, required to be married: he always had a female assistant who might be his wife or a daughter, and, unofficially, other members of his family were drawn in to help.[21] In certain circumstances, a sewing mistress was

appointed, and she would receive from the Government 'a stock of material such as calico, prints, wincey, flannel and dungaree, and of implements such as needles, thimbles, scissors etc.'[22] These she would sell to her pupils at cost price.

Under the umbrella of health, a welter of advice was offered concerning dress, food and festivities. Maori girls should adopt a sensible style of dress and would not, like some foolish Pakeha girls, use clothing to squeeze their waists and alter their shapes:[23] there should be no drinking or feasting at a funeral and 'the *hui* should give way to the traditional Victorian picnic'.[24] Such gross intrusions into Maori custom were largely ignored.

Before official recognition came, there was awareness among some teachers that the assimilative approach to Maori education was not working as had been expected. A survey carried out in 1930 confirmed that Maori was the only language spoken in 95 percent of Maori homes, and that village life was little changed.[25] This led to a reappraisal of the whole purpose of Maori education. Progress was slow as most teachers were unprepared for the type of change proposed. It was the first of a series of moves over the next 50 years to meet the needs of Maori youth in planning their education for changing times.

As far as girls were concerned, attention was drawn to the fact that their employment opportunities were distinctly limited by the nature of their education. Very few had schooling beyond the fourth standard. They were anxious to be independent but seldom had the means.[26]

Focus on the task of preparing Maori girls for employment was diverted by notions such as that expressed by T. G. Strong, the Director of Education, in 1931. He believed that the Education Department's aim should be to provide fully for Maori youths a system of education that would enable 'the lad to become a good farmer and the girl to become a good farmer's wife'.[27] The Department was slow in recognizing that young Maori women needed skills for urban employment, though, as Sir Apirana Ngata pointed out, the possibilities for Maori families to support themselves on the land were fast diminishing.[28]

Awareness that the Maori population had been steadily increasing over a number of years signalled to the authorities and to the Maori people themselves that they were not a dying race.

Prospects were raised by the Labour Government's family allowances and Social Security scheme, and school attendance improved. By the end of 1939, there were 145 Native schools and the roll (10,169) had almost doubled in 20 years.[29]

The 'quickening of the Maori spirit' that was reported in 1935[30] coincided with a more creative movement in education in general. The Hadow Report was quoted as relevant to changes in Maori education: 'The curriculum is to be thought of in terms of activity and experience rather than knowledge to be acquired and facts stored.'[31] For the girls, there was to be more concentrated training for home life. In some areas, model cottages were built in the school grounds. The cooperation of the district nurse was enlisted, and infant welfare classes were recommended for the older girls and junior branches of the Red Cross were formed. A tentative move towards parent involvement led to the formation of branches of the Women's Institute which met at the school so that girls and their mothers could participate in the same activities.[32] There were clubs in which boys were encouraged to grow vegetables and both boys and girls to rear calves and poultry. The girls had their own sweet-pea clubs, with annual competitions for the best blooms.[33] Working on practical projects sometimes enabled better relationships between teachers and pupils.

Doubts lingered about segregated schooling for Maori pupils. Some schemes failed because the Maori community themselves had not been consulted about their implementation.[34] On their side, there was still some scepticism about the schools' appropriatation of training in such subjects as cooking and vegetable growing which were tasks belonging to the *kainga*.

With increasing urbanization, there were proportionately more Maori children in public schools than in the village schools. By the mid-fifties, the ratio was 9 to 1.[37] A special committee on Maori education in 1955 advised that the Maori schools should gradually be absorbed. This also was the strong recommendation of the Hunn Report on the Department of Maori Affairs in 1961. The reasons were both demographic and ideological. 'Because children mix easily and naturally,' the report stated, 'the cause of race relations would be best served by absorbing as many Maori children as possible into the public schools.'[35] The process had already begun and was completed by 1969. As differences in syllabus had long disappeared,

38 Girl working on a tukutuku panel at Ruatoria, 1947.

39 Preserving fruit in a domestic training class at Ruatoria in the 1940s.

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the change was mainly administrative and the special entitlements which the village schools had enjoyed could now be more widely spread.

A Maori Boarding School

In 1900 and for the next 40 years, the state made no separate provision beyond the primary school for the education of Maori boys and girls. For those from isolated areas, the Government provided a limited number of boarding scholarships, most of them held at denominational schools for Maori students. It has been pointed out as a unique feature of missionary education in New Zealand that, from the beginning, girls were seen as having as much right to education as boys.[36] When the churches saw the need for boarding schools for Maori pupils of secondary school age, girls' as well as boys' schools were founded. The Anglican Church founded Hukarere College in Napier in 1875, Queen Victoria in Auckland in 1901 and Te Wai Pounamu in Christchurch in 1909; St Joseph's Providence was founded as a mission school by the Roman Catholic church in 1867 and Turakina Maori Girls' School by the Presbyterian Church in 1905.

The way in which Turakina has evolved illustrates some of the changing opportunities and expectations. When the school was founded, the attitude that women in general should be the moral saviours of the race was also specifically directed towards Maori women. The view was expressed that moral degeneracy in Maori communities could have been hastened by the ignorance of the women and the inactivity of the girls.[37] The infant mortality rate for the Maori race was alarmingly high and the Presbyterian Mission saw it as part of its preventive work to train Maori mothers. At Turakina, 36 kilometres from Wanganui, a large wooden building, first a manse and then a young ladies' seminary,[38] was now adapted to house between 20 and 30 Maori girls. Book-learning was attended to, but the intention of the founders was 'to teach the girls to live healthful, clean and busy lives, fitting them above all things for the home'. The stated aims were:

1. To give the ordinary public school standard education to the boarders.

40 Turakina Maori Girls' School, 1905.

2. To take those desiring it beyond Standard VI in a special course of English, history, laws of health, physiology, etc.
3. To give a thorough domestic training.
4. To teach plain cooking, the use of milk foods, sick nursing, etc.
5. To give a good Bible training to point the pupils to Jesus Christ.[39]

There were critics of the sectarian influence of such schools. One outspoken freelance journalist deplored the founding of Turakina. He railed against the misspent charity of the widow's mite given to raise her brown-skinned sisters at Turakina and elsewhere.[40] Even those who saw the value of such boarding school education were vexed by the persisting problem of how to cope with the return to the *kainga*. At Tokomaru Bay, this was a social difficulty recognized by the school authorities who sought a solution:

> Girls on their return from boarding school, highly educated relatively, have to hang about the settlement waiting for an opening to lead the life they have learnt to appreciate. The problem is to find a bridge from the boarding school to a Pakeha's life in a Maori district.[41]

For the first 25 years, most of the teaching at Turakina appears

to have been at primary school level. Staffing was minimal, depending to a large extent on missionary dedication; severe financial restrictions and the tight schedule of the school day prevented expansion of the curriculum.

The original emphasis in the curriculum offered at Turakina is indicated by the list of prizes in the first year: Class marks (dux); Scripture and Scripture Verses: Housework (gold medal); Sewing; Cooking; Best manners; Good Conduct; Outside work; Diligence; Milking and Garden work.[42]

The Prime Minister, the Rt Hon. R. J. Seddon, had promised at the opening that there would be 5 government scholarships, to be increased to 10.[43] In fact, restrictions concerning residence and previous attendance at a Native School meant that there were years when no girls at Turakina received government scholarships.[44] As it became a coveted privilege to go off to boarding school, scholarships were provided from church sources, and teachers, concerned for the future of promising Maori pupils, commonly solicited help towards fees from the community. However, the school syllabus was based on that laid down for students receiving government grants:

Boys	*Girls*
1. English	1. English
2. Arithmetic	2. Arithmetic
3. Military Drill	3. Military drill
4. Elementary practical agriculture	4 & 5. Domestic science (cooking laundrywork, housewifery, dressmaking, health)
5. Woodwork	
6. Singing	6. Singing

and at least one of the following:

1. Maori	1. Physiology
2. Drawing	2. Geography
3. Elementary mathematics	3. Drawing
4. Elementary physical measurement	
5. Geography	
6. English history	
7. Physiology[45]	

It was also required that pupils should receive some instruction in health, morals and civics. More was clearly expected from boys, and girls who wanted to continue their education suffered for many years from their lack of training in mathematics and science.

Inspectors were invariably impressed by the tone and discipline in the girls' schools but suggested that they might emulate the boys' schools in drawing up better programmes of suitable academic work.[46] Latin, offered for years at Queen Victoria and Hukarere and for a short time at Turakina, was not considered suitable. Maori language became compulsory for all government scholars in 1931 and later an essential part of the curriculum, offered for School Certificate. As one headmistress said, 'You couldn't refuse to include Maori without taking away their self-respect.'[47]

The struggle to provide pupils with opportunities to which, it was felt, they were entitled, is evident in the slowly increasing number entering for outside examinations. By 1920, it appears that only one girl at Turakina had passed Standard VI. In 1928, when the school moved to Marton, it was called Turakina Maori Girls' College and gradually, between 1930 and 1940, it became entirely secondary, preparing girls for Intermediate and Public Service Examinations. With a roll of over 50 in 1944, two girls passed School Certificate and, in 1952, the first girl gained University Entrance. In 1975, with increased availability of scholarships, the roll had reached 122 and the entry and pass rate in outside examinations, though fluctuating, could sometimes be above the national average.[48]

While the emphasis on examinations grew, the aim of the founders to train the girls to be 'worthy Christian home-makers' was still paramount. Teaching was by practice and example. The first headmaster, A. J. Hamilton, and his wife wanted the girls to feel included in their own family, and each girl had her turn at household tasks, with a system of promotion. The highest responsibility was to be in charge of the kitchen.

A strong model of capable administration was provided by his successor, Elizabeth Kinross, who guided the school for 30 years and established it at Marton. She and her three assistants, with 'not a man in the place', ran the school, the house and garden. This included milking cows, mowing lawns and growing vegetables as well as baking the bread, cooking, cleaning and laundrywork.

Through the Maori boarding schools, boys with ability were encouraged to enter the professions, but expectations for girls were more restricted. Paternalistic statements concerning their future took on an insistent note.

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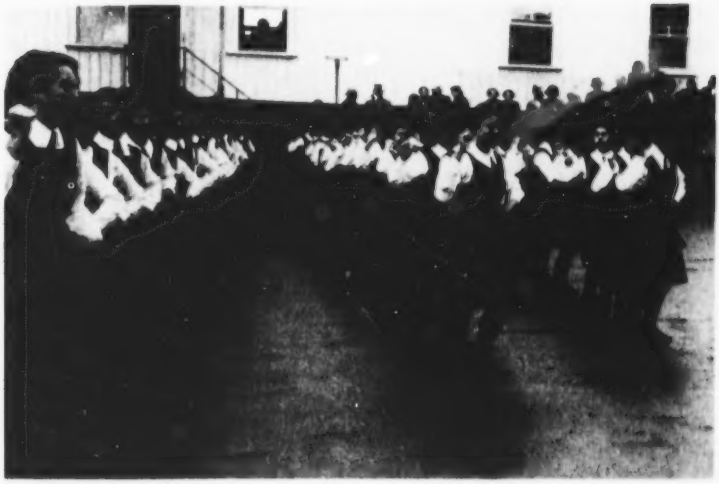
41 *Dressmaking class at Hukarere, 1913.*

42 *Official welcome at Queen Victoria Maori Girls' College, 1953.*



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> Unless a Maori girl is destined to become a teacher, as some have done with great success, or to seek training as a nurse, it seems to me [declared W. W. Bird, Inspector, talking of the curriculum a school like Turakina might offer] that there is no need for her to spend time in studying the various rules in arithmetic. . . . Her time had far better be devoted to acquiring those accomplishments which every woman should possess and which go so far to make the home comfortable.[49]

Teaching and nursing were avenues through which, it was hoped, Maori girls would plough back into their communities the advantages of their education. The Government provided one or two nursing scholarships a year which enabled Maori girls to have an introductory period at a hospital before embarking on training.[50] Maori girls could become assistants in village schools and from there some went on to training, but the numbers were very small until, as late as the 1940s, the teachers' colleges adopted a quota system for Maori students.

Much of the idealism which led Maori youths to aspire towards the professions and to work towards social and health reforms came through the Young Maori Movement which was started by a group of Te Aute ex-pupils in the 1890s.[51] As they cut across tribal barriers, the church schools provided fruitful soil for such idealism, and they were in general sensitive to the preservation of Maori traditions. This was not at first a conscious part of their programme and, for the first 30 years at least, a Pakeha education was what girls came to Turakina for and what their parents requested. To talk of 'Maori culture' was not the fashion.[52] However, from the start, there was an appreciation of Maori language and custom. At the opening ceremony, local Maori dignitaries took part, and a hymn was sung in Maori.[53] During the thirties, the school responded to the revival of interest in Maori crafts. The boarding schools have, in fact, done much to preserve the unwritten culture of the Maori people. At both Hukarere and Turakina, girls were encouraged to perform songs and chants they had brought back from their tribes and, in more recent years, these have been recorded. Entertaining thus became a positive way of reviving and preserving their culture.

Respect for the traditions of the church and for Maori customs went hand in hand. The chapel, built in 1955, combined conventional design with carving and panels of Maori craftsmanship, the *tukutuku* and *kowhaiwhai* made by the girls.

With an emphasis on work, there was little time for leisure in the early life of the school. After the move to Marton, enthusiasm developed for basketball, hockey, tennis and, later, softball while competitive sport provided opportunities for mixing with other schools.

The effects of isolation and segregation have had to be considered in deciding the future of Turakina and other Maori boarding schools. Some non-Maori students, particularly those on scholarships from other parts of the Pacific, have helped to break down the cultural separation. Senior pupils have taken some subjects at other Marton schools, and Turakina, in exchange, has offered courses in Maori language. Questions of the future, in the early seventies, were weighted with anxieties about rising costs and doubts about the continuing need to provide private schooling. Maori students were now attending state schools in large numbers and only 6 percent of those at secondary school in 1973 were at church boarding schools.[54] Conviction that the school still served a need in changing times led the Turakina authorities to give serious consideration to integrating with the state system under the Private Schools Integration Act of 1975.*

In recent years, as Maori women have emerged into public life, many of their leaders refer back to the training they received in the Maori boarding schools. Here, in spite of the drawbacks of such an education, they appear to have acquired 'confidence from the security which that education provided'. This is the view of Arapera Blank of the Ngati Porou who says of her own schooling at Hukarere that

> preparation for leadership, good housekeeping, some academic success, the fulfilment of religious and spiritual needs, and the maintenance of *Maoritanga* pervaded the curriculum.[55]

At a State Secondary School

Though, officially, Maori girls and boys were fully entitled to free places in secondary schools, very few found their way there till the 1940s. What happened in the Whakatane area and how girls have

*The school became integrated in 1981.

fared there may be taken as representative of developments elsewhere.

The district high school started in Whakatane in 1920 to meet the needs of the growing dairy-farming community. Of the 25 duly qualified pupils who were guaranteed,[56] not one was a Maori, though there was a Maori settlement handy to the town, and some 2,000 Maoris lived in the county.[57] As the school grew in the 1930s a few Maori girls were enrolled, conspicuously the children of those who had themselves received an education. By the 1940s, it became more obvious that Maori students were lagging behind. Various reasons were put forward: there was some lingering distrust of book-learning; facilities for study and access to books were lacking in Maori homes; Maori children started with a severe disadvantage in language. An explanation given at the time was that they were depending on limited English acquired in early childhood and it was inadequate for their later needs. For many, isolation was still the problem. The allowance of 7s 6d a week towards board for those in remote places was inadequate, but other allowances under the Social Security scheme were beginning to have an effect.[58] By 1940, 33 percent of Maori pupils were going on to secondary school, compared with 63 percent for the country as a whole.[59] In the following year, the government established three Maori district high schools on the East Coast, and another at Ruatoki was approved in 1947. The practice of going on to secondary school gradually became the norm and, at Whakatane District High School, by 1949 when the roll had increased to 325, about a third of the pupils were Maori. By the 1970s, the percentage of Maori pupils fluctuated between 40 and 45.

Maori girls going on to this school in the 1940s, and after it had become a full high school in 1950, found themselves in the minority: their needs were secondary to building up the school's reputation according to traditional criteria. Increasing difficulties in obtaining qualified women staff precluded the development of any schemes in the girls' interests. They had to fit into a Pakeha system where priority was given to academic achievement, to success in male sport and to an efficient cadet corps. Where Maori pupils received special help, it was from individual teachers who responded to their needs.

As classes were streamed on the results of an entrance test, most Maori girls were placed in the homecraft course, with a few in

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commercial classes, and a very small number in the upper streams. This meant that there was some segregation according to sex and race: a homecraft class could be largely Maori girls and a technical class almost entirely Maori boys.[60] While there were undoubted gains in confidence and camaraderie from such togetherness, these were offset by the feeling among the Maori pupils themselves that they were 'no-hopers'. Nevertheless, the more tenacious persisted in their attempts to overcome the immense hurdle which School Certificate posed for them before single-subject passes were allowed. A class where all were trying for the third time was likely to be entirely Maori, and deserving of the extra push towards success which only a few of them achieved. To these students applied the observation that Maori secondary school pupils 'need to be prodded through their course'.[61]

A Maori club, which attracted more girls than boys, was started in 1950, and though it was heralded with high hopes, its popularity fluctuated. As its main function was performance, it had little impact on the daily life of the school. At times, there were Maori language classes, but they were less stable than French which flourished and Latin which was provided for the elite.

Following the recommendations of the Hunn Report, the Maori Education Foundation was established in 1961. Failure to perform well at school seemed at least partially attributable to disadvantages in the early years. For this reason, Maori women in the district rallied enthusiastically to support the growth of playcentres, made possible with grants from the Foundation.[62] There was a great sharpening of consciousness concerning the needs of Maori youth.

More significant changes came in the early seventies. Abandoning the entrance test (seen as culturally biased) and reducing the practice of streaming brought a wider spread of Maori pupils throughout the various courses. Teachers came back from refresher courses with new insights gained from Maori people themselves who had told them about their needs. The experience of large schools in the Auckland area with high numbers of Maori and Pacific Island students, the influence of Maori education advisers[63] from the department and the voice of young Maori people had a cumulative effect. Messages were coming through from women concerning the health and educational needs of young Maori women.

The major change that took place at Whakatane High School was the acceptance of the fact that its large Maori roll could enhance the life of the whole school. Hospitality in the Maori manner became an important part of the school's life: there were plans for a meeting house in the grounds to provide the school with its own *marae;* a canteen beside it became known as the *whare kai.* A live-in course on a neighbouring *marae* could provide an alternative form of teaching and enable the needs of students to be heard. The aim was to build up a friendly environment where there could be a sense of pride.

Maori girls were directly affected by the changes. With teachers trained for the purpose, the Maori language course stabilized, and the majority who elected to take it were Maori girls. Encouragement in mathematics also resulted in slightly more girls than boys advancing the subject to higher forms. On the other hand, established girls' subjects attracted smaller numbers and there were comments that girls appeared to function better in the traditional system than did boys.

Greater numbers entered for examinations, with girls having a slightly higher pass rate than boys, but the successes for Maori students were still well below those for the total number of entrants. This fall-off in examination attainment was a matter of national concern. In 1975, 2.8 percent of Maori leavers in the country gained University Entrance and 0.4 percent gained University Bursary compared with a national average of 12.5 and 5.6 percent. Seventy-five percent of Maori pupils left without qualification, whereas the national average was 42 percent.[64]

Concern about such results raised many questions and prompted schemes for positive action. One constructive proposal at Whakatane was to try grouping together Maori students who could be seen to be achieving and to place them in a class with a minority of Pakeha pupils.

Maori girls found their way to leadership in the school from the 1950s on, sometimes as school prefects but increasingly in sport. They began to dominate the top basketball teams and to show their strength in soccer and swimming. In its early district high school days, Whakatane boasted three basketball teams with Maori names but not a Maori player, but, in 1975, when two netball teams went with a school tour to Australia, all the players were Maori.[65]

In the arts, more influence from Maori culture emerged. Instead of the annual Gilbert and Sullivan performance, musicals based on Maori legends were composed and produced. At the same time, carving became the most important craft in the school, one which, contrary to well-guarded tradition, girls were allowed to learn.

In the Maori Club, which had gained in strength, Maori girls took a leading part as far as protocol allowed. There was no question of their speaking on the *marae*, though they had the example of the district's legendary chieftainess who, left in charge of the great canoe while the men were foraging ashore, boldly broke the sanctions by taking a paddle to save the canoe from drifting, saying, *'Kai whakatane au i ahau.'** ('Let me make myself a man.') This action, it is said, has given high-born women in some East Coast tribes the right to speak on the *marae*.[66] Some Maori leaders, among them elders preparing for change, have placed special significance on this issue, urging that the practice of women speaking on the *marae* should be accepted as a right, not just with the permission of men, though once

> it would have called down the wrath of the *tohunga* and the *taniwha* and the women would have been condemned by the elders, even with the curse of childlessness.[67]

Some attempt was made to involve Maori mothers in the education of their high school children, for it was recognized that the strong influence of older women could be used to reinforce enlightenment as well as tradition. They became involved at the school in junior branches of the Maori Women's Welfare League, their chief concern being the question of health.

A survey of Maori standards of health for a 20-year period ending in 1975 produced disturbing figures on the health of Maori women. The consequences of faulty diet and smoking were highlighted: it appeared, for example, that among rural adolescents girls smoked more than boys and that Maori girls were three times more likely to smoke than were Pakeha girls.[68] At Whakatane, it had become by far the most common playground problem.

Employment opportunities fluctuated with the economy. The dearth of Maori girls working in the Whakatane shops had been observed by a visiting American sociologist in 1957: the banks, he said, would not employ them.[69] Their services were in demand

*These words are used as the school motto.

when there was a shortage of female labour in the sixties, but, in the early seventies, they were beginning to suffer from the downturn which affected girl school leavers in general and Maori girls in particular.

Success was inevitably measured by standards of a European education system. Seeking attainment in a competitive field has not been a way of achieving respect in Maori society[70] where status may depend on ancestry or achievements that would not be recognized at school.

What, then, had been the effects on Maori girls of the expectation that they would measure up to the system and, at the same time, be prepared to maintain their role within the Maori family?

In the first quarter century, Maori girls had little experience beyond the village school where most of them remained impervious to indoctrination and were satisfied if they had acquired some skill in reading, writing and adding. This bore out Ernest and Pearl Beaglehole's observation in 1946, that 'education in school has left few abiding impressions beyond a slight ability to manage figures and words'.[71]

The denominational schools took further the process of providing a matrix into which girls would be fitted for their own good and that of the nation. They introduced girls to the expectation of efficient household management as well as the Christian virtues of moral influence, work-filled days, and making the most of one's talents. As they encouraged pride in being Maori, it was understood that Maori girls would use the gift of education for the betterment of the race. This influence seems to have continued, though affecting a proportionately smaller number as other opportunities have opened up.

Many Maori boys and girls saw the public schools and state secondary schools as belonging to a separate world, and dropped out of the system early. While the inclusion of Maori cultural activities has been a well-intentioned addition to the curriculum, the urgency of the need and the authoritative voice of Maori people have demanded change of a more imaginative kind. Moreover, Maori women have continued to value and to seek 'as much education as possible' for their daughters.[72]

Synchronizing the pace of change in two different cultures has

been one of the problems in the education of Maori women. Other influences such as urbanization, economic change, employment opportunities, active feminism as well as their schooling have had fluctuating influence on the expectations of adolescent Maori girls, not always, it seems, at the same rate or to the same degree as on New Zealand youth in general. Schooling increased their opportunities, but the gap in the European sense remained. Whereas much of the schooling specially designed for Maori girls between 1900 and 1975 emphasized domestic responsibility, a goal which was both attractive and restricting, the need and the desire for paid employment increased. At the same time, attitudes and opportunities which limited the range of employment for all schoolgirls remained even narrower for young Maori women. In spite of this, there were some who emerged from school well equipped to launch into new fields, and some who were bold and articulate enough to test the wrath of the *taniwha*.

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Be Good, Sweet Maid

Outside the subjects of the curriculum, to what extent have the ethos and environment of the schools themselves distinguished the educational experience of girls? How have attitudes towards discipline and guidance contributed to their own perception of their roles?

Girls learn early that they are expected to behave better than boys. The fact that they are, in general, more compliant has been recognized as one reason for their advancing at a greater rate than boys at the primary stage. Girls are more accustomed to appeals to their better feelings and to rewards and deprivations as methods of control.

In the crowded classrooms in public primary schools at the turn of the century, the strap was the most ready disciplinary tool. Girls were not exempt. A concerned father wrote to the North Canterbury Education Board in 1905 asking if there was any school under their jurisdiction where, for health reasons, his daughter could be assured of not receiving corporal punishment. The Board's solicitors upheld the school's right, pointing out that the schoolmaster was a public servant performing a public duty.[1] Though there was general agreement among schoolteachers that girls should be subjected to corporal punishment only in exceptional circumstances, and then at the hands of a woman, there was no accounting for what would happen if the strap was handy. By-laws that it should not be used on girls over 10 were generally, though not always, observed. The fact that, during the seventies, corporal punishment could still, though very rarely, be inflicted on secondary school girls,[2] is not generally publicized. This is an aspect of boys' schooling where co-

education has wrought some change and some preference for more humane methods of discipline.

Fear of the spontaneous energy of youth was responsible for some repressiveness. Girls' schools protected themselves with a profusion of rules with corresponding discredits, deprivations or punishments. In fussiness, New Zealand schools may not have gone as far as their English counterparts. One pupil of the North London Collegiate School remembered her school as a place of iron discipline with innumerable niggling restrictions:

> We were forbidden to get wet on the way to school, to walk more than three in a row, to drop a pencil box, leave a book at home, hang a boot-bag by only one loop, run down the stairs, speak in class.[3]

There was reaction against this type of rigidity but New Zealand girls could produce similar lists with idiosyncratic variations. Christchurch Girls' High School included among those offences punishable by fine (to be paid into the games fund) talking or playing in corridors during class hours, leaving books or other articles lying about and carelessly spilling ink. There were rules ensuring the smooth running of the day, rules to preserve the school's public image, rules to forestall trouble and provide protection. 'Out of bounds' usually meant some place where it was possible to hold an assignation or talk to a boy over the fence.

The day in the life of a boarding-school girl was directed by regulations, beginning with a chilly and early uprising. New Plymouth Girls' High School placed first in the list of general regulations for boarders the categorical statement:

> All boarders have a cold shower each morning. If for any reason exemption is desired, the Principal should be communicated with.

Communal life required orderliness, and individualists could be daunted by the insistence that there was a correct procedure for every action. A pupil at Epsom Girls' Grammar School described the disheartening effect of returning to the hostel, in forlorn mood, and being confronted by the familiar notice, 'Teeth are not to be cleaned over the bath'. 'Even now', she recalls, 'I can't clean my teeth over the bath without a feeling of guilt.'[4]

Considerable use was made of guilt as a tool of discipline. Along with this went the appeal to higher feelings. The 'honour' system was encouraged in girls' schools. A class would be put 'on its honour'

not to talk and an essential part of the code was 'owning up'. It could include some loyalty to the peer group in the form of not 'telling on' others but, where the honour of the form or the school was at stake, this was the higher loyalty. It depended for its functioning on a system that was hierarchical and normally included class monitors and prefects.

Such discipline was pernickety but seldom harsh. Control was exerted, to a large extent, by the personal influence of the principal and her staff. An appeal to a girl to "be good' could be enough. Schoolmistresses in the early years of the century often approached their task with missionary zeal. Functioning as they were within the accepted notions of a woman's sphere, they built up for their profession an ethic of caring and service.

It was to be expected, then, that the headmistress might see her role as a motherly one. This was most noticeable in boarding schools. The advertisement for boarders at Otago Girls' High School early in the century announced: 'The Lady Principal resides in the house and is thus able to bring her influence to bear on the boarders'.[5] The more exclusive Ladies' College at Remuera advertising in the *Graphic* went further: 'Home life is combined with the culture and disciplinary influences of school under maternal supervision and with selected companionship.'

Men teachers have commented on the benign influence of women on the staff of mixed schools and, at its best, professional teaching has also meant human caring. While girls' schools were still small, there was sometimes a tendency to develop an atmosphere of moral earnestness and cosy domesticity which later generations were anxious to cast off.

Relationships within an all-female institution were sometimes intense. Talk of the schoolgirl crush came and went with fashion. The authorities treated it as something belonging to schoolgirl fiction, or best ignored. Any discussion of intimate emotions was not encouraged, and it was only some years after leaving school that Constance Barnicoat, an early New Zealand journalist from Nelson, was able to write with feeling of her attachment to a schoolgirl to whom she gives her own name:

> I, at least, loved Constance, was downhearted if she had not spoken so much as usual to me, and joyful, even to the utmost heights of

43 *Wellington school girls in uniform, 1945.*

> jubilation, when she had given me her chief attention. I had the true 'in love' sort of love for her.[6]

In the 1950s, the book *Olivia* by Olivia, an account of an English girl's experience at a French boarding school, opened up some discussion of the reality of schoolgirls' attachments, but the theme has received little attention in New Zealand literature.

The uniform, which New Zealand schools assiduously adopted, served several functions. The gym tunic, originally intended to allow greater freedom of movement, was also a kind of protection. Janet Frame, in *To the Is-land* gives a remarkably personal, inner view of a uniformed schoolgirl's life in the 1930s, and touches on the universal:

> My memory of myself contains now myself looking outward and myself looking within from without, developing the 'view' that others might have, and because I was my body and its functions and that body was clothed during most waking hours in a dark gray serge tunic that I hated

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> increasingly because it was far too tight now in the yoke, it was rough, scratchy material; and in long, black stockings with their sealing effect; and in blouses, pure white in summer, gray flannel in winter . . . and in the black shoes laced in complete capture of my feet; in the regulation gloves, hat, or beret; and, as a final imprisonment, in the red and black tie knotted around my neck and the green Gibson House Girdle also specially knotted around my waist, because of these clothes I saw myself as powerlessly in harness.[7]

Opportunities to talk over personal problems were seldom made. More familiar was the 'talk' which headmistresses and, to some extent, senior women in co-educational schools might use to lead the way to good behaviour, to self-discipline and to an understanding of wider issues of moral and social concern. These might be informal talks to small groups, or appeals to the whole school at assembly. One principal of a city girls' school saw the function of assembly as establishing a corporate feeling, another hoped for moments of illumination, another, in a large state school, could see no reason why the religious function of assembly should be undervalued.

Christina Cruickshank at Wanganui Girls' College was one of the first to use someone from outside the school to give talks to girls on their own sexual make-up. Her action in arranging a series of lectures 'by a medical lady of sound experience and judgement' was commended by the Cohen Commission as an example which other schools might follow.[8] In 1921 and 1922, articles appeared in the Education Gazette, written by the Director of the Division of School Hygiene (Department of Health) giving suggestions for a scheme of sex education which would comprise

> the general relationships of the sexes, of man and woman, boy and girl, in everyday life, rather than as a subject concerned specifically with the function of reproduction.[9]

At no time, he said, should there be any repression of wholesome enquiry, and he recommended Edith Howes *The Cradle Ship*. This fairy-tale attempt to dispel the gooseberry-bush myth gave some idea of a baby conceived in love by two parents and growing inside the body of the mother who explained, 'For months she lay and grew in the silken baby-bag beneath my heart.'[10] Girls might well have pondered on how the seed got there and how the baby got out, but they would not have been officially enlightened at school.

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This neglected area of girls' education came into the curriculum of some schools with social education programmes in the 1960s and, whatever the official attitudes, the lifting of taboos in literature and the media gave opportunities for freer discussion of sexual relationships in class.

The need for vocational guidance was foreseen by John Macmillan Brown. In 1908, he spoke of the lack of 'some official expert to take the place of the guild-masters of the medieval city . . . a practical psychologist with knowledge of the prospects available.'[11] The transition from school to work was a matter of special interest in the technical colleges and it was as a result of some preliminary work in this area that two vocational guidance officers were appointed in 1929, working on a part-time basis from Christchurch Technical College. One of these, Christobel Robinson who, in 1944, became chief girls' vocational guidance officer, remembers that the task in the early years was largely fitting school leavers to the jobs available, though she herself had a special concern for finding appropriate occupation for those with special needs.[12]

The work of vocational guidance officers began to reveal some of the limitations in the education girls were receiving. The author of a study of New Zealand girls working in factories in 1947 found that they displayed a marked lack of confidence, partly attributable to their status as 'factory girls', but largely due to their restricted education which, at that time, had rarely gone beyond primary school.

> An inadequate education [she observed] besides involving feelings of inferiority on account of its very inadequacy, leaves people less able to cope with their social environment and therefore acutely aware of their own limitations.

She had met girls with an intelligence obviously higher than that of the New Zealand undergraduate who felt that they were constitutionally incapable of anything better than domestic or factory work.[13]

School careers advisers and vocational guidance officers had some influence in encouraging girls to stay on longer at school in order to be better prepared for the work force. By the 1970s, it was less likely that girls of high intelligence would find themselves in factories, but it became evident that the range of work they were undertaking was still limited. Questions were being asked about the

guidance that girls were receiving. Was it, together with the literature provided, helping to maintain stereotypes and encourage entry into conventional occupations? Was it taking into account the fact that, with increasing technology and the entry of men into traditionally female fields of employment, different kinds of advice and information might be needed? Such questions have come not so much from within the schools as from academic research workers and feminist groups.

The appointment of guidance counsellors in most secondary schools as a gradual process from the early 1960s, following a successful experiment at Avonside Girls' High School, gave boys and girls in need of help the chance to reach a better understanding of themselves. As girls in co-educational schools showed they were willing to seek help from male counsellors, the attitude that only women can help girls with their personal needs was challenged.

As schools grew bigger, many ways were tried of enabling individual needs to be heard and of breaking down the inhibiting atmosphere. Girls who responded to the pressure to conform were among those whose needs for support and affirmation might pass unnoticed. Rachel McAlpine's feelings emerged some years after leaving school:

> I did the quickstep neatly
> I was Captain of the House
> a member of the Choir and
> the B Hockey Team a very good
> report on the whole
>
> I remember homework
> and many people frowning and
> a stomach ache every day
>
> did the teachers honestly
> think
>
> I was very good very good
> very good? why didn't
> anybody say?[14]

The fact that girls, particularly when working alongside boys might underplay their ability to avoid success has been observed in personal accounts of schooling and in research. Matina Horner's studies of university students at Michigan give evidence of the fear among women that success in competitive achievement will have

negative consequences such as unpopularity and loss of femininity.[15]

In spite of some of the wearisome trappings of the daily round, the discipline which girls experienced at school was seldom harshly punitive. They could have met heavy authoritarianism but, more often than not, controls were explained as reasonable, depending on respect for others and self-discipline. Few girls in New Zealand, before 1975, had the experience of alternative schooling where they could expect to be treated as adults in all decision-making, but many were given opportunities for organization and leadership, apparently more in single-sex than in co-educational schools. Guidance generally, though not exclusively, led them to traditional occupations and, in most cases, conformity was more highly prized than individualism. Any experiences of emotional intensity were disruptive in a schoolgirl's life. This was an increasing cause of tension as young adults at school found themselves less able to accept traditional controls.

It is recognized that, by the 1970s, a major change had taken place in the relationship towards authority, particularly among older schoolgirls. There was less change in the attributes that were prized at school and therefore in the understanding of their role which women carried away. A principal with advanced and liberating views could still say, with obvious pleasure, 'This is a very well-disciplined school.'

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A Stir in the Minds of Women

An advertisement that appeared in New Zealand newspapers early in the century bore the caption, 'She can do anything in a Warner's Rust-Proof Corset'. The notion grew that a woman was, in fact, able to do anything and if she was unadventurous that was her choice or her fate. Girls at school were told of a handful of outstanding women whose exploits proved that all was conceivable. Marie Curie's achievements kept alive the possibility that New Zealand might produce a woman to match Lord Rutherford, though what might be lost in the process provided a warning: Marie Curie's appointment to her husband's chair at the Sorbonne was reported locally with adulation, but also with the ominous remark of a spectator at the ceremony, 'It was no longer a woman that stood before me but a brain.'[1]

During the thirties, when the depression put a clamp on women's activities outside the home, the imagination could wander. Jean Batten, former Auckland schoolgirl, accomplished her ambition to fly solo from England to Australia in 1934 and, two years later, her flight from Croydon to Auckland made her a local heroine. Photographs of her in flying suit fixing the engine of her plane were proof that women could enter fully into the new scientific and technical age. During the Second World War, women, for the first time, were seen as conductors on buses and trams and in other male occupations: pictures appeared of Princess Elizabeth, as heir to the throne, changing a tyre on an army vehicle. From New Zealand a handful of women in uniform set off on troop ships for the war zones, and it seemed that all artificial barriers were down.

In women's affairs, there was talk of the gains and a tendency to gloss over ensuing setbacks. The story of women in the medical

profession has many examples of the closing of doors after initial entry was gained. By 1943, the Golden Jubilee of Women's Franchise in New Zealand, only four women had become members of parliament.* At the jubilee celebrations, women were told of the advances that had been made and were urged to work towards the best in education for all. They were reminded of Lloyd George's cry, 'Never again shall we spend more on beer than on education; never again shall we be guilty of the unpardonable sin of wasting millions in luxuries of the flesh and grudging hundreds for the necessities of the mind.'[2] The position of women was not mentioned; it was not a proper concern alongside the broad issues of education and social welfare.

It was only to be expected that the war would bring anxiety about the birth rate and be followed by a strong back-to-the-homes movement. This did not affect the official curriculum but was evident in the popular press and in some educational writing. A book which appeared in England in 1948, John Newsom's *Education for Girls*, echoed the familiar clichés concerning the waste in training girls for the professions: not only would their stay be shorter, but men were unlikely to accept women doctors, barristers and administrators. Basing his views on a popular notion that men and women are complementary, and that marriage is the main 'occupation' of women, Newsom declared the education of girls along the same lines as boys as 'a modern perversion' and advocated a curriculum that based girls' studies on the home itself.[3] It was not until the 1960s that the publication of his views in the press brought a torrent of criticism.

In 1951, John Bowlby gave his report to the World Health Organisation on *Maternal Care and Mental Health*. The publication of a more popular version, *Child Care and the Growth of Love*, had some influence in New Zealand in improving the care of motherless children. At the same time, it reinforced current beliefs that small children thrived on the undivided attention of their mothers. Indeed, the first question that was asked about children who functioned badly at school was whether they had a working mother.

In the meantime, demographic changes had affected the position of women. The supply of spinsters on whom the development of

*Mabel Howard became the fifth later in 1943.

schools and hospitals had depended and to whom industry had turned for cheap labour was dwindling. This was pointed out to New Zealand Home Science graduates by Professor J. H. Robb in 1962. Unaccountably, marriage had become ever more popular since the turn of the century.

> This [he said] was the beginning of the era of female emancipation and the supporters of this movement looked forward with pleasure, and its opponents with alarm, to the day when women, freed from economic dependence on men, could increasingly choose a career rather than marriage. Exactly the reverse has happened and as women have achieved independence, access to higher education, professional training, and a political role, so they have increasingly chosen to be married rather than single.[4]

At the same time, fertility levels had dropped and women had a far longer span after the last of their children had gone to school. The well-publicized threat of boredom in suburbia corresponded with an increased demand for their services in a more affluent society and, by the middle sixties, women formed 28 percent of the full-time and 63 percent of the part-time work force.

For girls at school, the assumption that they would have career first and family afterwards persisted, though half their teachers and many of their mothers were demonstrably coping with both and the need for re-training was recognized.

Educational change was in the air and, in 1969, the Post-Primary Teachers' Association published *Education in Change* with a foreword by Sir John Newsom who, as a recent Chairman of the English Central Advisory Council for Education, wisely kept away from the subject of the girls' curriculum. Times were buoyant but the writers took a realistic view, looking ahead to an era when the span of employment would be reduced. They recognized that the school was more concerned with personal development than with vocational skills, and felt young people should be discouraged from leaving school early to enter jobs with good pay but without a future. This was particularly directed towards girls who were to be encouraged to reach a higher level of education for the traditional reason: because those who became mothers would do most to influence the next generation through the values and attitudes they transmitted to their children.[5] It was foreseen that women as well trained as men

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44 Science class at Naenae Intermediate School, 1969.

would be able to enter a wider range of occupations and contribute to the country's economic growth.

Disillusionment about this promise was to be one of the concerns of the new appraisal of women's rights which was already brewing. It was suggested that the limitation of women's occupations to a narrow range was partly attributable to the subjects they took at school. The curriculum for girls at secondary school was under investigation.

In 1969, the National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women called for a study of the education of girls in New Zealand. Their findings revealed that, beyond the fourth year, the number of girls staying on at school dropped off sharply compared with the

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number of boys. In 1965, 2,321 girls left after a fifth year of secondary schooling compared with 4,374 boys.[6] While more girls than boys gained School Certificate and University Entrance, fewer than half the successful candidates for University Bursary were girls, and a third of those for University Scholarship. For School Certificate, more girls than boys were taking, for whatever reason, subjects that ended in the fifth form and could not be advanced to University Entrance. The other significant difference was in the considerably smaller number of girls taking mathematics and pure sciences.[7] Mathematics was increasingly a requirement for a wide range of university courses as well as for work in technical and commercial fields. At seventh form level, girls showed a strong preference for arts subjects.

There seemed some basis for suggesting that the chances for women to enter a wider range of occupations was being limited at least partly by these factors. There was a need to investigate to what extent subject selection was determined by personal preference, by parents' wishes, by attitudes of teachers or by the grouping of subjects at school. Once again, questions were being asked about what a girl ought to learn at school. The matter was only a part of much wider issues concerning the position of women in society, but the curriculum for girls received attention. A clause in the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women declared that, at all levels of education, women shall have, along with men,

> the same choice of curricula, the same examinations, teaching staff with qualifications of the same standard, and school premises and equipment of the same quality, whether the institutions are co-educational or not.[8]

In the United States, amendments to the Education Act in 1972 contained the now famous Title 1X which stated that no one could be excluded from any course on the basis of sex. The Australian Schools Commission set up an enquiry to examine

> the underlying causes and the extent of under-achievement by girls and women in education and its contribution to the inferior status of women.[9]

Britain, in 1975, published a report of the first enquiry into the curriculum for girls since 1923.[10] There was, as in the excitement

of early suffragist activities in New Zealand, 'a stir in the minds of women'.[11]

In New Zealand, in November, 1975, as one of the projects for International Women's Year, a conference was held in Wellington on *Education and the Equality of the Sexes*. There was a note of urgency in the recommendations, which were practical and specific. Topics ranged from early childhood to continuing education and included the position of women in the teaching service. In matters of curriculum, the conference was basically concerned with the limited and inhibiting attitudes towards women's role in society which the teaching of some subjects could convey. Work on the elimination of sex-role stereotyping in textbooks had begun and participants were asked to consider further the statement of the Director General of Education, W. L. Renwick, about girls at primary school:

> We must ask ourselves how far, as a result of unthinking conventional expectations about their future role as women, we are in schools subjecting them to another self-fulfilling prophecy.[12]

Concerns at the secondary level included the attitudes of girls in mathematics and in the transition from school to the workforce. Many of the recommendations concerning human relationships, counselling, the physical environment of the school, the development of individual programmes would benefit the whole school population but would at the same time provide a climate in which women's needs would not be submerged. The immediate change was that it was not left to lonely voices to draw attention to the educational needs of women: a campaign was organized and given some official status.

The sense of immediacy was characteristic of the mood in which women's affairs were being addressed. Optimism was to some extent dulled by overwhelming questions concerning social control and the ordering of knowledge. Were schools being used to reproduce cultural patterns advantageous to a capitalist society? Was a complete upheaval of the social structure necessary before educational change could be effective? But the urgency was dominant. 'Neither I, nor the generations ahead for whom we are fighting, are prepared to wait for an illusory long-term millenium,' said Eileen Byrne in England, advocating an identical range of subjects for boys and girls at secondary school and equal access to technical training.[13]

Pragmatic moves were proposed, within attainable limits. Many of the concerns which came to a head in the mid-seventies were long-standing ones and changes were already afoot. In the girls' curriculum, the numbers taking mathematics in senior forms were already on a noticeably rising curve.

In Retrospect

The gains had been considerable and it would have been possible to write a celebratory history concentrating on these alone. To recapitulate now, somewhat baldly, what we have learnt of the progress and the contradictions is also to provide a pointer to some of the continuing concerns.

Early primary schooling was based on liberal views of equality, but notions of passive femininity were cultivated in subject matter and in the school environment.

Teaching opened up career opportunities for women but the assumption that they would not as a rule be seen in senior positions over men was entrenched.

On an academic level, girls showed that they could compete on an equal footing with boys, and there seemed to be no justification for lower expectations.

Widening opportunities for secondary education brought alternative courses for girls: these gave more girls a chance to extend their schooling, to cope with school without the burden of Matriculation and to leave when they chose for paid work or life at home. At the same time, they provided a steady supply of women to enter the dead-end occupations which the industrial world provided for them.

The development of home science brought a new field of academic study for women and improved the teaching of home-related subjects in schools. Its introduction as a matriculation subject for girls hindered their progress in scientific fields. Home-orientated courses provided useful alternatives for girls but were hampered by being identified as low-stream, female alternatives.

Vigorous developments in physical education were in some measure affected by less generous provision of space and equipment

for girls and by the perpetuation of myths concerning women's capabilities.

Aesthetic development was given more attention in girls' than in boys' schools, but the aim was not always creative expression. Boys suffered more than girls from the undervaluing of artistic interests.

For both Maori and Pakeha girls the school experience could provide confidence for the future, but it also had the capacity to reinforce a sense of inadequacy.

In girls' schools, the advantages of association with capable women fulfilling administrative roles could be offset by an artificially segregated atmosphere. In mixed schools, the opportunities given to girls depended more on the attitudes and organization of the school than on any special claim to enlightenment by virtue of co-educational status.

Actively expressed public opinion has sometimes combined with other forces – educational, economic and political – to bring about curriculum decisions. At the same time, attitudes towards the role of women in society have entered into the curriculum in covert ways. That such influences have not been static and are likely to be cyclic is neatly summed up by Ruth Adam.

> A woman born at the turn of the century could have lived through two periods when it was her normal duty to devote herself obsessively to her children, three when it was her duty to society to neglect them; two when it was right to be seductively 'feminine' and three when it was a pressing social obligation to be the reverse; three separate periods in which she was a bad wife, mother and citizen for wanting to go out and earn her own living, and three others when she was an even worse wife, mother and citizen for not being eager to do so.[14]

Prospect

Schools have functioned and curricula have been implemented while those responsible have held widely differing views, and students have responded to the experience in a variety of predictable and unpredictable ways. The work of the pioneers in girls' education shows that total agreement is not necessary for advance. The greatest leap forward was in the last three decades of the nineteenth century. The leaders in this movement have been classified under three

headings according to their perception of the educational needs of girls: the Instrumentalists, believing that educational assimilation and equal employment opportunities with boys were the answer; the Liberal Humanists, looking for solutions that would widen the intellectual horizons of women and at the same time prepare them to be better wives; the Moralists, offering a demanding curriculum with religious teaching, conducive to the notion of dutiful womanhood.[15] Frances Buss and Emily Davies belong to the first category and Dorothea Beale to the last, and, in New Zealand, John Macmillan Brown and Helen Connon and many of their contemporaries appear to fit into the second. It is likely that, among women educationists today and the men who share their concerns, there is an equally wide range of educational philosophy. The essential common ground seems to be conviction of the importance to women of the best possible education, both for their personal development and in the broad interests of humanity.

The climate in the seventies seemed right for levelling the imbalance in curriculum provisions for boys and girls alike. However, history carried warnings against complacency. There were counter-forces to be reckoned with – a declining economy, receding employment chances, fear of undermining traditional values, and to some extent lack of interest among students themselves. One committed feminist principal said that the students at her single-sex school were the greatest force towards conservatism. Having learnt to think for themselves, they were resistant to anything that might be considered indoctrination and saw encouragement to apply for non-conventional jobs as a form of manipulation. Chip technology in the commercial world brought a diminution in traditional women's work, advertisers continued to present misleading images of sex and the domestic scene, and there were signs of weariness with feminism.

Certain humanitarian curriculum reforms were already in the pipeline. Plans to provide boys and girls alike from Form I to Form IV with a structured programme in home economics could, if effectively implemented, break down the old divisions in manual subjects and take us a little further along the road to a healthy sharing of family responsibilities. The idea has been around for a long time. T. H. Huxley, that articulate supporter of women's education who was determined that his own daughters should not grow up as

'mantraps for the marriage market', had outlined a scheme of education in which domestic economy would be 'especially but not exclusively, for girls'.[16]

Concentrating on cooking for boys and woodwork for girls can cloud other issues of equality in curriculum. Any future planning will have to take into account the relationship between provision at school and the fact that, at all levels, women will continue to seek work and interests outside the home. Political manipulation and economic constraints may create difficulties but, within the schools, there will be wariness of any provisions which place girls at a disadvantage. There is still cause for anxiety that girls may be left behind in the acquisition of new skills to meet technological change. At the same time, the relationship between the curriculum that girls follow at school and the progress of women in higher levels of academic achievement, in appointments and promotion in careers and in public life, will have to be watched. In the headlong drive towards marketable skills, some tenacity may be needed to keep what is valuable. Is it going to be possible to maintain the advantages of individual choice which developed in the sixties and seventies and gave some girls new opportunities? And what is to happen to the languages girls have traditionally been offered? In New Zealand, they may not at the moment have high career value, but there seems little reason why boys and girls should be denied the intellectual interest, the linguistic training, even the leisure satisfaction which languages provide.

It is easier to plan courses that offer equal opportunity than to deal with attitudes that are entrenched, particularly those concerning soft options for girls. It is well over a hundred years since Miss Beale spoke scornfully of 'that old rubbish about masculine and feminine subjects'.[17] The persistence of such differentiation could now be laid to rest along with the fears for the fate of intellectual women and their families which prevailed earlier in the century. With attitudes of equality established, it would be not only quaint but irrelevant to ask the question: 'What would you have a woman know?'

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It's different for daughters

THIS study of the curriculum for girls from the beginning of this century frames a fresh perspective for New Zealand educational history. Following the early triumphs of gaining the vote and the right to qualify for university degrees, progress in women's education was not always straightforward. Social attitudes and provisions for girls at state schools in the first quarter century established patterns for later generations to inherit and modify. In some areas, such as science and mathematics, inequalities for Maori girls lingered. Using a wide range of resources, Ruth Fry traces the origin and development of the curriculum for girls to 1975, International Women's Year. Those who, in 1893, achieved success in their campaign for equal voting rights were also concerned about educational opportunities for women. NZCER is very pleased to reissue *It's different for daughters* to celebrate the Centenary of Women's Suffrage in New Zealand.

The Author

Ruth Fry MA Hons, Dip Ed, has taught in secondary schools in New Zealand and England, spending six years in the fifties as principal of Magdalen School, Wellington. Other publications by the author include *Out of Silence: Methodist Women of Aotearoa 1822–1985* and *Mana and Amber: New Zealand Mothers and Daughters and the Women's Cause 1869–1984*.

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